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## Editor's Preface

Welcome to the best issue of the *Journal of Early American Numismatics* (JEAN) in the nearly 60-year history of JEAN / CNL. There is something in this issue for every lover of Colonial numismatics.

According to Karl Moulton in his superb book *John J. Ford, Jr and The Franklin Hoard*,<sup>1</sup> Ford once said “[e]ver since the first coin was sold to anybody, somebody has lied about it... We lie about different things at different times.” Moulton’s book reads like a prosecutor’s brief or federal indictment of Ford. Several members of JEAN’s editorial staff, most notably John Kleeberg, strongly share Moulton’s opinion. Ford, however, was never charged or convicted of any crime related to counterfeiting or fraud and deserves the presumption of innocence; particularly since he can no longer defend himself. It was the Bard of Avon who penned that “[t]he evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones.” Thus has it been for the memory of John J. Ford.

Dave Bowers, who knew Ford from the early 1950s until his death in 2005, has a different perspective on Ford that he shares with us here for the first time. When Dave sent me his biographical essay on Ford, I felt it was the best and most heartfelt thing he had ever written. I did not know Ford, but after reading what Dave wrote, I thought I knew him very well. In preparation to edit Dave’s work, I purchased Moulton’s 2013 book and read it as well as what Kleeberg has written on the topic. I believe Moulton and Kleeberg present a compelling case

for Ford's direct involvement in creating and selling counterfeit western gold ingots and coins. Dave, however, offers new information on Ford that sheds light on his personality and actions. Dave's essay is both funny and sad, but most of all it is thought-provoking. In the end, I am sure you will come away with a much better understanding and appreciation of Ford's accomplishments as well as insight into his alleged nefarious activities. Make sure you don't start reading it too late at night because once you start, you will not be able to put it down.

The John J. Ford story is not the only outstanding piece in this issue. When I was at the C4 convention in Baltimore last year, we went around the room asking members at the annual meeting what they collected. I was surprised at the number of responses that included Lion dollars. These coins were recently added to the *Red Book*, causing a surge in interest, but as I questioned people about them, few collectors could tell me anything meaningful. When I asked who the go-to person was, one name kept popping up, Ray Williams. Therefore, I solicited Ray, a valuable member of *JEAN*'s editorial staff, to prepare a basic primer on Lion dollars—nothing too in-depth, but a simple article with good images to set a foundation from which future articles could be based and beginning collectors could get started. Ray has done just that. His article is to the point and will be helpful to hundreds of collectors as they start their Lion dollar collecting journey.

This issue also features an article by another member of our editorial team, Julia Casey. Julia's piece is on the 1776-dated Massachusetts copper coinage. Several years ago, Ye Editor started to write the definitive article proving once and for all that this coinage was a mid-nineteenth-century fabrication that had no place in the *Red Book*. I never completed my research. Now, I'm glad I didn't. Julia takes a contrary view to the prevailing group-think and brings to light new evidence that Paul Revere may have actually had a hand in creating these objects. As part of her research, Julia and I spent a morning together as guests of the Massachusetts Historical Society examining the 1776-dated copper in its collection. I had been told many times that when I saw this specimen in Boston, I would immediately know it was a fake. Indeed, I came fully prepared to share this view with Julia, but while I found many aspects of the coin to be, shall we say, curious, nothing about it screamed fake to me. The easiest thing in the world would be to opine that this coinage is bogus. That is, after all, what collectors, dealers, and experts whisper at shows, but after examining two of the coins (the ANS and MHS specimens) and reading Julia's article, I am not as confident as I once was. Julia presents information concerning the authenticity of this coinage that deserves to be seriously considered. It may or may not convince the masses, but like many things in Colonial coinage, it might be a good idea if we pump the

brakes and think about what we believe a little more critically. Mark Twain once said, “It ain’t what you know that gets you into trouble. It’s what you know for certain that just ain’t so.” I firmly believe that we are certain about many things in colonial numismatics that just ain’t so. It is time we started to look critically at many of our firmly held beliefs. Perhaps this makes me an iconoclast, but I only seek the truth, which brings me to the next topic.

In the last issue of *JEAN*, we published an article by John Kleeberg on the Continental dollar. The response to this piece has been impressive. When I go to shows or talk to collectors on the phone at least 20% of our subscribers tell me how much they *love* John’s article and *strongly agree* with his conclusions. An equal number of people have a negative opinion of the piece and seem to have no problem telling me so. After the article appeared, several subscribers immediately contacted me to say they wanted to write something expressing the opposite opinion. In every instance, I said I would give them as much space as they needed. Jeff Rock is the only person who stepped forward and actually submitted something. As you will see from reading it, I edited Jeff’s piece and even provided suggestions to improve his arguments; however, I struggled with whether or not it was an appropriate thing to publish in this journal. At one point, I considered listing it as a Letter to the Editor as a way of cowardly distancing myself from the controversy. Some on *JEAN*’s editorial committee went so far as to suggest that we not publish it at all, but I’m not a pusillanimous censor. I believe in the free flow and expression of ideas and that in the marketplace of ideas, if both sides have an equal opportunity to express themselves, the best idea will prevail. Therefore, I am publishing Jeff’s piece as an article—it is not, as you shall see, the only unusually formatted piece in this issue. In the next issue, I invite John Kleeberg or anyone else to submit a piece of any reasonable length expressing the point of view that the Continental dollar was struck and circulated in America and/or point out any flaws in Jeff’s reasoning. After that, the discussion will be closed unless someone comes up with some tangible evidence that changes the debate.

Another unusual article in this issue is the publication of research notes relating to the 1778-dated Non Dependens Status copper. At the end of the nineteenth century, much ink was spilled over this coinage, but, as the last century dawned, interest began to fade as it appeared the mysteries of its origin would never be solved. One man, however, kept the flame alive, privately working in obscurity to solve the puzzle of this coinage—his name, Byron White. Last year, Dave Bowers sent me White’s research journal on the Non Dependens Status copper to see if I thought it might be something appropriate for dissemination in *JEAN*. Byron died in 2006, having never published his findings. After review-

ing White's work, I agreed it was something that needed to be shared with our readers. What I did not know at the time was that I was not alone in this opinion. After the article was typeset, Dave located another file kept by White that contained all of his private correspondence relating to the Non Dependens. Judging by the condition of the file, which Dave forwarded to me, it had not been cracked open since well before White's death—it was like a time capsule. Buried deep in the mountain of material was a letter from Richard Picker dated October 15, 1969 (when Ye Editor was but a wee babe). The letter showed that White sent his research on the Non Dependens to Picker for his review and comment shortly after Neil Armstrong took his famous first steps on the moon. Picker wrote him back, "do you get the *Colonial Newsletter*? If not, let me know, and I'll send your name in for a subscription.... That might be a good place to publish something like this, as we have a very active readership." Fifty years later, we still have a very active readership, and we hope the publication of White's research will stimulate a revival of interest and discovery in this most enigmatic coinage.

For many decades, the *Colonial Newsletter* was the place to publish discoveries of new Colonial coin varieties. I am proud to continue this tradition with Chris Salmon and Kayla Schlemmer's articles. I was thrilled when Chris sent his report to me. Years before, I attended a C4 convention in Baltimore and heard Chris speak about the Massachusetts silver coinage. I thought then, and I believe now that it was the best and most informative talk on any topic—numismatic or otherwise—that I have ever heard. Chris is *the* expert in this area, so much so that I had to turn to John Kleeberg, Dr. Phil Mossman, and Lou Jordan to help me edit his article because it was beyond my capability to judge the substance. I'm glad I did since they made many excellent edits that improved this already fantastic piece. We are blessed at *JEAN* to have the very best editorial staff in numismatics—all of us volunteers. In addition to Chris's discovery article, we are presenting a second colonial discovery article, this one from Kayla Schlemmer.

The world of counterfeit halfpence is a morass that Ye Editor avoids like the plague, but we each have our likes and dislikes; that, after all, is what makes the world go 'round. A great many of our subscribers love to dig into the mysteries of these coins. They are plentiful—often sold in group lots. Most likely they formed the backbone of commerce in colonial and pre-federal America. Because there are so many of them still today, they are relatively inexpensive compared to other colonial coins and thus have great upside potential. Astute collectors can amass knowledge that can be turned to gold by cherry-picking rare varieties. There is also a certain charm in their crudeness as well as the funny names ascribed to them by scholars of the series. As such, the appeal of these coins is undeniable. Many of our subscribers are working diligently to bring order and

reason to the series, an accomplishment for which I am certain posterity shall reward and recognize them. One of the scholars slaving away in the salt mines of counterfeit halfpence is Kayla Schlemmer. Her keen eye and attention to detail permitted her to see what others missed—a new variety of counterfeit halfpence misattributed within Eric Newman's collection being sold at auction. How satisfying it must be to make such a discovery. How great the feeling to be rewarded for all those hours of toil. And, most importantly, how good for us that this discovery is shared so that we might all learn something new about this critical and underappreciated coinage.

Gary Trudgen continues to provide us with excellent articles that are always a hit with our subscribers. After our last issue, I received many positive comments, particularly from New Jersey collectors, regarding his monographs. In this issue, Gary examines the life and work of Colonial sword-maker John Bailey to discover new information on coining activity in and around New York City. Over the years, Gary has made many groundbreaking finds concerning counterfeit coining operations in New York—he is, without a doubt, *the expert* in this area. It is no secret that I consider Gary a mentor both as a prior editor of this publication and a researcher. We are fortunate to have him as a contributor to this publication and a member of our editorial staff.

The first issue of *JEAN* contained an overview of Spanish coinage in North America by Brian Stickney. We follow that article up here with another article on Spanish coinage—this time focusing on the Potosi Mint and its direct impact on American silver coinage. I have traveled all over the world, but never to South America. I would love to go to Potosi and see the mountain of silver from which much of the world's supply of this precious metal was mined for hundreds of years.

Joseph Daragan has provided us with another excellent article. His article on Higley coppers in the first issue of *JEAN* is, in my opinion, one of the top 10 articles to ever appear in the *Colonial Newsletter*. If you did not read it, go back and do so now, you will not be disappointed. His article in this issue continues the tradition of excellence we have come to expect from him. The current article focuses on the life of Thomas Sparrow, the Maryland engraver who prepared the dies for the Chalmer's coinage. I have said it before, but it is worth repeating, biographical research is an avenue through which many of the mysteries of colonial numismatics can and will be unlocked in the future.

Speaking of the future, the December issue of *JEAN* will feature an article by Ye Editor on Pitt tokens. I had hoped to present the material in this issue, but I am happy to give voice to other authors in this exceptional volume and use the extra time to perfect my work. I have been studying and researching

Pitt halfpennies and farthings for several years now. An appendix to my more extensive Pitt tokens article that focuses on British Pitt medals will be published this summer in the *MCA Advisory*. In addition, as part of my full article, I have prepared a complete census of all known Pitt farthings. If you own a Pitt farthing or have information about Pitt farthings or Pitt halfpennies, please contact me. I am particularly interested in information regarding the current whereabouts of the Garrett Pitt farthing, (Bowers & Ruddy galleries, October 1, 1980), lot 1320. This unusual copper specimen was last seen, as far as I can determine, in 2002, when Eric Newman shipped it back to Lawrence Lee, who was at that time curator of the ANA. Newman's notes on this specimen indicate that it is unique in several respects. Although I believe the characteristics observed by Newman in the Garrett specimen may also be present in the Norweb #2 Pitt farthing, (Bowers and Merena, Inc., October 12–13, 1987), lot 1241, which I have located, it is important to my research that I examine the Garrett piece. Any help in finding this item is much appreciated.

It is also my hope that the next issue will feature an in-depth look at the American Colonial coin holdings of Ms. Sarah Sophia Banks. Our editorial staff, with the help of our friends at the ANS, has been working with the British Museum to image all of Ms. Banks' American Colonial coins, which we expect to publish in December. Moreover, the author of the monograph has been mining Ms. Banks' detailed records concerning her acquisition of these items. We believe this material will lead to many discoveries that will help us answer several pressing questions about American Colonial coins.

In closing, I wish to present my opinion on the state of Colonial numismatic research and *JEAN*. I believe that every month brings us closer to discovering the truth about many Colonial coin series. Everywhere I go, people stop me to tell me about an article or research they are working on or thinking about. On occasion, what I hear is stunning in its importance. If we work together, I believe we can push back the veil of time and untangle the mysteries behind many American Colonial coin series. The editorial staff at *JEAN* is here to help you. Maybe it's just me, but I think it's better to publish your research when you are alive rather than afterward. It is human nature to put off 'til tomorrow what should be done today, but remember we have a limited number of tomorrows, so send me your articles today.

Thank you for your patronage. I hope you enjoy this issue of *JEAN*. Please tell your friends about us. Our subscriber base has doubled in the last few years, and I'd like to continue that trend.

Christopher R. McDowell,  
Cincinnati, Ohio

## John J. Ford, Jr.: A Life in Three Portraits

Q. DAVID BOWERS (WOLFEBORO, NEW HAMPSHIRE)

### FIRST PORTRAIT: THE EARLY YEARS

#### Introduction

I first met John in late 1952 or early 1953 (Fig. 1). By the latter time I had been immersed in numismatics for all of a year, had read voraciously, had a small but decent library, and had come to read about the players in the field of numismatic research and history—this being a special interest. I have always enjoyed “coin people” and their experiences. Soon after I began collecting I started keeping notes on numismatic personalities I met in person. In 1956 while having dinner with B. Max Mehl, I suggested to him that he write his autobiography.<sup>1</sup> “Why don’t you do it for me?” he suggested. I never did. I probably made a mistake.

Among the numismatic figures I met in the early days of my interest, John J. Ford, Jr. was especially prominent. I had admired his recent but discontinued “Numismatica Americana” series in the second series of Wayte Raymond’s *Coin Collector’s Journal*—articles as readable today as they were then. The catalogues he co-wrote with Walter Breen for the New Netherlands Coin Company were

1. Mehl (1884–1957) was the most prominent rare coin dealer in America in the early twentieth century.

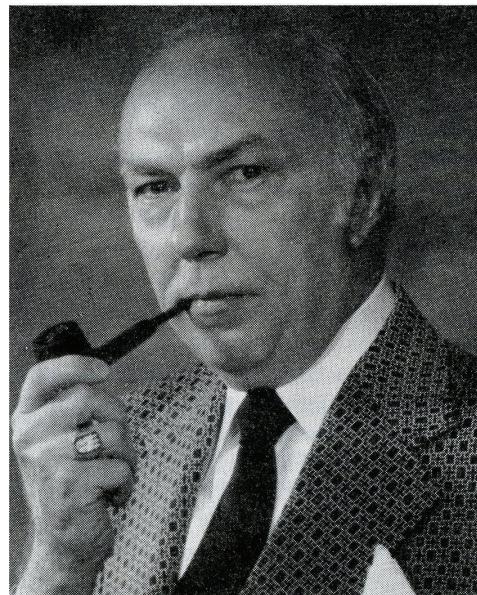


Figure 1. John J. Ford, Jr. (Portrait by Bacharach).

still very much in progress in the mid-1950s, and it was always a treat to receive one in my mailbox. After sampling a few, I determined to get them all. The firm was founded in 1936, and some of the publications of the early years were scarce. I soon learned that I could live without these rarities, for the new era of New Netherlands cataloguing style began with the 1952 ANA Convention, and it was easy to bring my library up to date from there.

John took an instant liking to me, and vice-versa. Early on he said I reminded him of himself in his youth—starting as a teenager, learning everything there was to know about pattern coins (in particular), and profiting by going around to different dealers buying patterns that were not identified as such. We both came from families without much money, although his was virtually destitute in the early 1930s, while mine at least had the basic comforts of life.

On the following pages I share my recollections of John, including many of his stories. In the heyday of his life he was the most admired numismatic scholar on the subject of authenticity and was featured in many articles and programs by the American Numismatic Association, the Professional Numismatists Guild, and others. I hasten to say that when I shared advance copies of this article with several others I received suggestions and comments, including that my view is biased toward the memory of Ford and not compatible in some aspects with the

opinions of others, such as that I only know a fraction of what *really* happened, and so on. Accordingly, this article not only contains recollection and facts, but also my opinions. Some do, indeed, differ from those of others. At the end of this article I endeavor to give an overall view, including the thoughts of contributors to the study.

One of John's specialties was Western numismatic Americana. In 1957 he printed a two-page leaflet and mailed it to banks, jewelers, historical societies, and others in the West (Fig. 2).

This effort resulted in many remarkable finds, and he was credited with many important new discoveries of gold coins and ingots from the California Gold Rush (Fig. 3). Some of these became a part of the National Numismatic Collection at the Smithsonian Institution.

My favorite of the new discoveries, the \$20 gold coin said by Ford to have been minted in San Francisco for the use on gaming tables at the Diana casino—a famous place in its day. As Karl V. Moulton related to me in correspondence, Hinton Helper's 1855 book, *The Land of Gold, Reality Versus Fiction*, reveals that the gambling within Diana was not conducted by the house, but was done by those who rented tables.<sup>2</sup> The mystery deepened. Gold Rush history has always been a special interest for me.

In 1958 when I as a partner with Jim Ruddy in the Empire Coin Company, I wrote the first issue of *Empire Topics* (which over a long period of time evolved into, sort of, the *Empire Review*, the *Rare Coin Review*, and the *Numismatic Sun*), both Ford and Walter Breen critiqued it. The publication was an instant success, and in short order had such contributors as Breen, Eric P. Newman, and Ken Bressett. Ford promised an article, but never got around to do it. In fact, he did not have time to do much of anything that reached print, except New Netherlands catalogues. Perhaps that is why he wanted me to write a book about him. I took endless notes of our conversations and details of our correspondence, which made it possible for me to write the essay you are now reading. In later years he continually reminded me that I was his appointed biographer. He hoped to see a book in print, after which he would sell his collection. Most of this information would have been lost otherwise. Most of the details I relate in this article will be new to most readers.

Somehow, John found the time to proofread and copy-edit several of my books. Whenever I turned out a new volume I would send him one, often two:

2. Moulton correspondence April 8, 2019. Also see Moulton's book, *John J. Ford, Jr. and the "Franklin Hoard,"* 2013, pp. 290–94. Dr. Richard Doty, curator of the National Numismatic Collection, stated without attribution to its origin, "This piece is likely to be a modern fantasy from the mid-twentieth century."

*Q. D. B. - My original 1957 info circular - for your files. 11/3/82  
the writers are a joke!*

*Read makes -  
QDR*

**INFORMATION CONCERNING**

**GOLD, ELECTRUM, SILVER  
BARS & INGOTS**

**OF NUMISMATIC INTEREST**

**WANTED!**





From 1849 to about 1906, various individual Assayers, Private, State and even Federal Assay Offices, Bankers and Mining Companies, manufactured and issued bars and ingots. Composed of Gold, Silver, or a combination of both as a natural alloy (Electrum), these pieces originated in the territories and states of CALIFORNIA, ARIZONA, NEVADA, UTAH, NEW MEXICO AND COLORADO. Some have even been found from OREGON, WASHINGTON and IDAHO; others, from MONTANA and SOUTH DAKOTA, are said to have been made. In addition to these western bars and ingots, similar items were made about the country at the various U. S. Government Assay Offices, along with issues of Alaskan-Canadian manufacture (from the period of the Klondyke gold rush, 1897-99).

Sometimes crudely cast, often carefully finished, these precious metal bars and ingots were invariably stamped with the name of the issuer, sometimes with the place and date of manufacture. Almost all have the composition and fineness, the weight, and the value in Dollars and Cents also stamped upon them. Rarely, some are found with a stamp from a die, resembling a coin in appearance.

In the early days, Gold, Electrum and Silver bars and ingots were freely used as money, and are found with "even amount" denominations, such as, Ten, Fifteen, Sixteen, Eighteen, Twenty, Twenty-Five, Fifty, One Hundred and Two Hundred Dollars. If dated, and from either California (1849 to 1856) or Colorado (1859 to 1862), issues of this type can be of great importance to a collector. However, the great proportion of these pieces, are found stamped with highly odd amounts (\$2.66, \$8.76, \$13.55, \$31.60, \$54.50 and so forth), representing their exact value at the time. Almost all of them are the results of conversion, by an Assayer, of raw dust or metal brought to him, assayed and put into identifiable form.

Tremendous numbers of these bars and ingots were issued by a great many individuals and firms. Only in recent years, have collectors and numismatists begun the study of them. While made in very high quantities, a large number of these pioneer bars and ingots were melted, either at the U. S. Mint in San Francisco, or as they were brought back east. Those that were saved or retained, were kept as souvenirs or mementos, and are generally the very small pieces, although a few medium size ones have been discovered. Obviously, the really large ingots and bars (often made to discourage stage robbers and highwaymen), were worth considerably more as they found their way towards civilization, and few people could afford to hold onto any of them for sentimental or historical reasons.

While not rare in the literal sense of the word, the various bars and ingots made are now hard to find. Almost all are held by people as family curiosities, and must be searched out. Although only a limited number of collectors of coins and western material are interested in these pieces, those that are do pay substantial premiums (over the present day intrinsic or metal value) for them.

The value of a given bar or ingot is based upon how much is stamped upon it, when and by whom it was made, and its general appearance. The size of a piece means little or nothing. While a small gold ingot, marked Ten Dollars, and issued in 1852 could be worth ten to thirty times its present day bullion content of about \$16-17.50, a large gold piece might only command double the metal content. Electrum bars and ingots are of somewhat lesser importance than gold ones, and silver ones bring from \$15 to \$100 each, the latter figure only in rare instances.

Of equal importance to the actual bars and ingots themselves, is the historical data and background concerning them. Letters, correspondence, drafts, checks, broadsides, directories, and even contemporary newspaper accounts, relating to any individual or company that made bars or ingots is of interest and collector's value. Also collected are gold coins made in the west, patterns and trials in any metal for them, unofficial coin dies and hand presses, paper money privately made in any western state before 1890, the letter and numeral punches used for making bars and ingots, bar and ingot moulds and almost anything else concerning western coins, bars and ingots, 1849-1906.

Figure 2 (and facing page). The Western Americana sheet given to me with his annotation in pencil. Sent for me to add to his biography file.

Valuable, privately struck fifty dollar piece.

Usually pure, long bar, made by Bates, Baxter & Co., about 1865, Mountain City, (Central City Dist.), Colorado Territory.

The fractional note at right was printed in Albany, N. Y., and was intended for use, 1851-52, in San Francisco. Several firms made and issued their own paper money in the West, 1850-1897. Bank, Express and Mining Company drafts and checks are also of interest to collectors. While hardly as valuable price-wise as are many bars and ingots, such paper script is of great historical importance. Still, this money you can't spend is often worth more than the regular kind.

Gold ingot for \$272.23, made in New Mexico Terr., 1870-75.

At right, an electrum or mixed metal assay ingot, issued at famous Virginia City, Nevada, by L. Kuh, a Chinese assayer, in the hey-day of the great Comstock Lode.

Silver bars are often found. This one, dated 1880, came from the Silver King mine. A great difficulty is locating data concerning these pieces.

WRITE TO  
**JOHN J. FORD, Jr.**  
 COMPILER, THE SPECIALIZED CATALOGUE OF U. S. GOLD COINS, BARS AND INGOTS.  
 176 HENDRICKSON AVENUE  
 ROCKVILLE CENTRE, L. I., NEW YORK  
 MEMBER AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY  
 LIFE MEMBER, NO. 250, AMERICAN NUMISMATIC ASSN.  
 NUMISMATICOS, ACTIVE MEMBER, CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
 Send detailed description or careful pencil rubbing of any bars or ingots located;  
 other material describe very carefully.  
 ALL CORRESPONDENCE ANSWERED. INFORMATION EXCHANGED, APPRAISALS GIVEN IN CONFIDENCE.  
 © 1957, JOHN J. FORD, JR.



Figure 3. The Diana gambling hall \$20 gold coin discovered by Ford. (National Numismatic Collection).

one for “keeping” and the other for reading. My book, *The Waterford Water Cure: A Numismatic Inquiry*, published in 1992, was his favorite. He considered it to be one of the finest studies ever done on a specialized numismatic subject.<sup>3</sup>

John was a perfectionist concerning the condition of books and catalogues. If perchance one of our auction catalogues, *Rare Coin Review* issues, or something else arrived with a slight crease on a corner, he would call to get a replacement. Like as not, this would be carefully packaged and sent between two stiff pieces of cardboard. Also, if there was an error of fact under Lot 2321 on page 327 of the catalogue, John would find it and not only tell me about it once, but remind me of it often. Of course, this today is a fond memory—and even at the time I appreciated the constructive criticism, even if not phrased gently.

John remained a friend for most of the rest of his life. I spent time with him in August 2000 at the American Numismatic Association convention in Philadelphia (Fig. 4) where we talked and he enjoyed seeing the Ship of Gold exhibit with treasures from the S.S. *Central America*.<sup>4</sup> My last visit with him was at the ANA convention in 2001, after which he was hospitalized. When my book on the *Central America* was published in 2002 I sent a copy to him at the hospital.

3. This concerned Dr. Shattuck’s Water Cure emporium in Waterford, Maine, that was advertised by counterstamping many different coins in the nineteenth century. I visited Waterford, interviewed the present owners of the buildings, and did extensive research.

4. Set up by Dwight N. Manley and the California Gold Marketing Group, the display featured a fanciful representation of the side of the ship that stretched across the front of the convention bourse area. Through portholes in it and in a representation of the Kellogg & Humbert Assay Office many coins, ingots, and other recovered items were shown. Dwight Manley gave Ford a special behind-the-scenes tour and also paid for him to fly to California to view treasure items being stored there. Ford never shared with me any observations he may have had.



Figure 4. The author and Ford at the American Numismatic Association Convention, Philadelphia, August 2000.

Not receiving any response, I telephoned the institution and was told that he was not allowed to receive any mail or calls. He went to his eternal reward in 2005, unaware that his family had already consigned his numismatic items to be auctioned.<sup>5</sup>

As John M. Kleeberg suggested in a communication, John's biography can be divided into three parts or portraits. I start now with his early life.

#### Ford's Early Life and Family

John Jay Ford, Jr., was born in Hollywood, California, on March 5, 1924, son of John and Mildred (Schatz) Ford (Fig. 5). The family lived in Los Angeles at 671 South Coronado Street in an apartment complex owned by famous boxer Jack Dempsey.

John Sr., born in New York City in 1890, married Mildred Schatz, born in Brooklyn, New York in 1903. By the late 1920s the elder Ford could look back on a life of adventure, including "escaping" from a monastery where, as an orphan, he had been placed by his grandparents. According to family tradition, John Senior shipped out on the high seas, determined to see the world. He came to San Francisco in time to help with rebuilding after the April 1906 earthquake, later

5. By Stack's beginning with a long series of sales commencing in 2003.

Q. DAVID BOWERS

Form No. 2

MARGIN RESERVED FOR BINDING  
WRITE PLAINLY WITH UNFADING INK. THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD  
READ THE INSTRUCTIONS ON BACK OF THIS CERTIFICATE

PLACE OF BIRTH, DIST. No. (To be inserted by Registrar)	California State Board of Health BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS	State Index No. <b>3478</b>
County of _____	STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH	
City or Town of _____	(No. 3901, ALBERTVILLE, S. INDIANA INVS SAINT VINCENT'S MATERNITY HOME, Ward)	
or Rural Registration District _____	If birth occurs in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number.	
FULL NAME OF CHILD <b>John Jay Ford Jr.</b>		
PERSONAL AND STATUTORY PARTICULARS		
SEX OF CHILD <b>Male</b>	Two, Triple, or Other (To be answered only in event of plural birth)	Number of year of birth BIRTH
FULL NAME <b>John Jay Ford</b>	FATHER	MOTHER <b>Mildred Schatz</b>
RESIDENCE <b>671 S. Colorado St., Los Angeles, Calif.</b>	AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY <b>33</b>	AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY <b>21</b>
ON RACE <b>white</b>	COLOR OR RACE <b>white</b>	ON RACE <b>white</b>
BIRTHPLACE <b>New York (State or country)</b>	BIRTHPLACE <b>Brooklyn (State or country)</b>	BIRTHPLACE <b>Brooklyn (State or country)</b>
OCCUPATION <b>vineyard</b>	INDUSTRY <b>vineyard</b>	INDUSTRY <b>housework</b>
(a) General nature of industry business, or occupation of father or mother, or both, if deceased or not at home particular kind of work		
(b) General nature of industry business, or occupation of father or mother, or both, if deceased or not at home particular kind of work		
Was a physician for both father & mother ever? If so, what? <b>John Jay Ford Jr.</b> <b>yes</b>		
Number of children born to this mother, including present birth <b>1</b>		
Number of children of this mother now living <b>1</b>		
CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE*		
I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child, who was <b>born alive</b> at <b>3:20 A.M.</b> on the date above stated <b>W.P. Franklin</b> <b>Physician, midwife, etc.</b>		
(Signature) <b>W.P. Franklin</b>		
Dated <b>3-5-24</b>		
Address <b>4361 Melrose Ave.</b>		
* File # <b>32177-19</b>		
Registration of Inquiry		

Figure 5. John J. Ford, Jr.'s birth certificate.

developed vineyards in the San Fernando Valley in California, and still later was in the oil business in Texas—certainly a remarkably varied set of activities—the very definition of an entrepreneur. For many of his experiences facts are scarce. I have not been able to find specific documentation in historical sources.

This was a glamorous era in the film industry, with such stars as Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Charles Chaplin, and Harold Lloyd entertaining millions with their performances on the silent screen. Prohibition, Great Gatsby, the Florida land boom, gangster wars in Chicago, the passing of President Warren Harding, and the new administration of Calvin Coolidge, are just a few scenarios evoked by the period. In Hollywood, the motion picture business was riding high during the Roaring Twenties, with Paramount, RKO, and other studios controlling films from the studio stage (not yet equipped for sound) all the way to presentation in grand theatres that resembled palaces, often opening with a spectacle of people, spotlights, limousines, and hoopla.

According to his recollections given to me years later, John Ford's father was caught up in this milieu, primarily as a stockbroker to the movie stars, but also an entrepreneur with his fingers in several business pies, including working with United Artists, of which Pickford and Fairbanks were essential factors.

Along the way he enjoyed collecting things. Somehow, he acquired the magnificent Herschede hall clock that had earned a grand prize at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco on 1915, still retained as a family heirloom. In 1923 he bought many 1923-S Monroe Doctrine commemorative half dollars at the issue price of \$1 each when they were sold in Los Angeles as part of a motion picture industry promotion. However, he was not known as a numismatist. Once, in his Cunningham automobile, he took a long trip across the Western desert—a remarkable enough feat that a newspaper account was written about it. Although he numbered movie stars and other entertainment notables among his friends, John Senior was also involved with a traveling circus.

Business went from uncertain, to bad, to terrible. John Junior was not certain of the exact circumstances, but the embezzlement of funds by a business associate were, according to my friend, part of the cause. Further research revealed that in 1925 he, then a member of the Consolidated Stock Exchange, was legally enjoined from selling stocks and securities, something either not known by his son or else not told to me.<sup>6</sup>

The Ford family left the Golden State around the middle of the decade, with money in the bank, but sharply reduced from earlier days. A 1925 New York census lists Mildred, 22, and John, 35 with no occupation given (a curious blank on the form), and John Junior, 1, as residents in Jackson Heights in the Queens borough of New York City. Another listing of the same year positions him as a manufacturer of radios, an occupation his son never mentioned to me. This would fit in with his entrepreneurial spirit as radios were a leading growth industry at the time. In New York, John became a securities broker and speculated in securities and seems to have regained wealth. That ended with the onset of the Depression in 1929.

In 1930 the Ford family lived at 3749 87th Street in Queens. He and his wife Mildred shared the residence with Mildred's mother, Mary V. Schatz, and John Junior, 6, and Mary J, 3. In 1934, Mrs. Schatz was heir to the proceeds of the will of her late brother, John J. Smith, and received about \$10,320 with the stipulation that she care for "Teddy," his pet Irish terrier.<sup>7</sup> Mrs. Schatz, then living in Hempstead on Long Island, died on September 16, 1938, and per her will her estate valued at \$10,000 went to her daughter.<sup>8</sup>

In an interview with me in the early 1990s, Ford remembered this: "By 1932, when the Depression got really bad, we were living in Jackson Heights in

6. Retrospective in the *Daily News*, New York, October 21, 1948.

7. *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Brooklyn, NY, May 25, 1934.

8. *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Brooklyn, NY, October 29, 1938.

Queens, which is about four or five miles from New York City. My father's partner had committed suicide in 1929, and my father was wiped out; he was really scrounging. Money was very, very tight in 1932, when I was eight years old. I went to a parochial school, St. Joan of Arc, and on the way home from school there was a German bakery where we used to buy our bread and rolls."

The glamour in the Ford family life had all but disappeared. Although the Depression overwhelmed most activities, hobbies came to the forefront, as these could be enjoyed by just about everyone with little expense. These included jigsaw puzzles, collecting stamps, engaging in outdoor sports and recreation, and more. In 1948, when his family was living at 176 South Center Street (name later changed to Hendrickson Avenue), in Rockville Centre, New York, his father, John Senior, was peddling a secret solution called "Ford Sulphur Solution," which he claimed to "cure everything from dandruff to athlete's foot." He was arrested "on charges of grand larceny and violating the general business law. It was charged he sold \$20,000 of worthless stock in his company, the Ford Chemical Corp., 108 Park Row. The buyers were mostly veterans and their families. He will have a hearing Oct. 29."<sup>9</sup> On June 3, 1949, in Special Sessions Court, he was convicted on two criminal counts.<sup>10</sup>

### Into Numismatics

It has been said that adversity breeds ambition, and for John, Jr., this seems to have been the case. He was exceptionally bright, taking in the world around him, recording every detail. In the meantime as a pre-teenager in the mid-1930s, he set about earning money doing odd jobs, investing the proceeds in a newfound interest: the hobby of stamp collecting.

Not long afterward, barely into double-digit age, John, Jr., discovered rare coins. The year was 1935. Perhaps he would get lucky and find a rare 1909-S V.D.B. cent to put into his "penny board."

The Depression was an era in which numismatics took a great leap forward based on several things coming together all at once. Wayte Raymond launched his *Standard Catalogue of United States Coins*, which would go through 18 editions and become the first regularly issued guide combining coin prices, mintage figures, and other information. Raymond also featured a series of popular albums with spaces for cents, nickels, dimes, and other coins.

J. K. Post, of Neenah, Wisconsin, marketed his own line of coin panels, permitting the collecting of Lincoln cents, Buffalo nickels, and other pieces from pocket change. In 1935 the Post enterprise was acquired by Western Publish-

9. Retrospective in the *Daily News*, New York, October 21, 1948.

10. *Nassau Daily Review-Star*, Nassau, NY, June 3, 1949.

ing Company of Racine, Wisconsin, inaugurating the spectacular career of the Whitman imprint which today is highly important in the production of albums, supplies, the annual *Guide Book of United States Coins* and the 1,500+ page *Mega Red Guide Book*.<sup>11</sup>

The low mintage figure for the 1931-S Lincoln cent, only 866,000 coins, created great interest, and a scramble ensued to find them. Whether John Ford was lucky, he never told me, but he soon had collections of Lincoln cents, Buffalo nickels, and other coins in circulation, including a smattering of scarce varieties.

All across America people were looking at their pocket change, an activity further spurred by radio and print advertisements by B. Max Mehl, Fort Worth, Texas, who said that if you could find a 1913 Liberty Head nickel, he would pay you \$50 (a premium later increased sharply). While dollars were scarce in the 1930s, just about anyone could afford to fill an album with different dates and mints of Lincoln cents or nickels. Indian cents were plentiful, and most dates could be found, although those before the 1890s were apt to be well worn. Liberty Head nickels, also worn, could be found back to 1883.

In 1935, within weeks after he started collecting cents from circulation, John made the acquaintance of Clarence J. Edgar, a banker who lived not far from New York City on Long Island, and who had a small coin business as well. Edgar told Ford that there was more to coins than looking through pocket change, and that books and magazines contained a lot of useful information. Forthwith, John started a numismatic library, with the *Standard Catalogue* as its foundation, surrounded by back issues of *The Numismatist* and a selection of auction catalogues. Later, he would credit Edgar for launching him on his numismatic career. By this time, collecting stamps was passé for him, and coins were the be-all and end-all of his interests. The entire world of rare coins beckoned. As part of their friendship, Edgar secured a position for John as a movie usher, an occupation he followed into the early 1940s and that helped pay expenses.

On the cusp of becoming a teenager, Ford voraciously absorbed information on colonial coins, patterns, and other specialties. His memory was photographic, or nearly so, and years later he could recite many details of things he had read in his youth. During the next several years he learned that the proprietors of most coin shops out in Long Island and also in New York City knew very little about the technical aspects of coins, were not at all acquainted with rare varieties in various obscure series, and often had pieces for sale thought to be common, but which had great potential value.

11. As you read these words, Whitman has published over 300 titles and editions since the Anderson Companies acquired the Whitman imprint in 2003 from its then-owner, St. Martin's Press of New York City.

Pattern coins in particular caught Ford's eye, as rarities were often available inexpensively. There were collectors who would buy these, as would some dealers such as Wayte Raymond in particular. Ford did a lively trade scouting for bargains, then doubling or tripling his investment by attributing the pieces and putting them in the hands of experts in those series. Somewhere along the way he became a great salesman—combining expertise, the stressing of low price, and giving reasons why items he had for sale were the best values ever. Probably, the promotions of his entrepreneurial—but not always ethical—father gave him many ideas.

On February 1, 1939, John attended what was his first meeting of a coin club, at least as recorded in *The Numismatist*. He told me that he became a regular attendee of the Brooklyn Coin Club, often bringing Confederate paper money, obsolete bank notes, and other items out of the mainstream of federal coinage. As to how often he was there, his name did not appear regularly in club accounts that I later examined. Perhaps teenagers were not entered in the records. Club members, including Joseph Barnet, a specialist in tokens, admired him for his remarkable knowledge and diverse interests.

In the summer of 1939 Ford was hired at age 15 by Stack's, a leading firm in New York City that had been founded in 1933 and had conducted its first public auction in 1935. At the time it was operated by brothers Joseph B. and Morton Stack, who had come to the city from West Virginia, where they had been in the jewelry trade. Morton in particular had a keen interest in numismatics and had joined the American Numismatic Association earlier, while living in Moundsville, West Virginia. That summer Stack's issued an aluminum store card or token with the New York World's Fair as its subject. Another local dealer, Abe Kosoff, issued a token as well.

The Stack brothers were sharp businessmen and kept an eye on the world around them, seeking opportunities. Over a period of years some of the best-known names in numismatics were on the staff. Later, the sons of the founders, Harvey and Norman, ran the business, with the occasional help of another son, Benjamin. Ford's early work there involved putting coins into 2 x 2-inch envelopes and marking the varieties, sorting stock, and helping around the store.

### Into the 1940s

In the summer of 1940 Ford was the main author of a 40-page study on United States pattern and die trial coins, listing varieties by Adams-Woodin numbers as published in 1913, and citing auction prices.<sup>12</sup> John graduated from high school

12. I have never seen a copy of this.

in 1941 and went to work for Stack's at \$18 for a six-day week and continued to be an usher at a movie theater in the evenings. At Stack's he created a series of fixed price lists.

Working for someone else on an exclusive basis was not his cup of tea, and on the side he conducted his own business separately from his home in Queens, where he issued a few mimeographed "catalogues" under the title of "Super Numismatic Bargain List," or similar. John showed me one of these and said that this was from the era of his youthful showmanship, and he must have learned this from his father's one-time connection with a circus. John never mentioned his father's shady activities to me and may not have known of the ones in which he engaged in the 1920s.

After Ford scouted the coin shops in New York City and Long Island, plus a half dozen or so jewelers who also handled coins, and bought rare patterns, tokens, medals, colonials, and other exotica, he would take them to Raymond, who was always a willing buyer. In time, Raymond called Ford his protégé.

In 1941 he met Homer K. Downing, a specialist in early large copper cents by die varieties. In the autumn of 1941 Downing took Ford on a trip to Upstate New York to call on Thomas L. Elder, the nearly-retired dealer who from the early 20th century through the late 1930s had been the most prominent dealer and auctioneer in New York City. Elder, who was disposing of his holdings, was a rich source for both men. They made a return trip, by which time Elder learned that Ford was an employee of the Stack brothers, bitter rivals to Elder in the late 1930s. That ended the Ford-Elder relationship. Ford and Downing had a close friendship that lasted until the collector's passing on May 29, 1951. Ford often credited Downing as one of his main influences in further studying the intricacies of numismatics. Regarding this, John M. Kleeberg commented: "Ford's obituary of Homer K. Downing is quite heartfelt. I have often wondered if Ford might not have gone off the rails if Downing had lived longer. Downing provided Ford with an ethical father figure role model that was lacking from Ford's upbringing."<sup>13</sup>

Along the way he formed a closer relationship with Wayte Raymond, who encouraged him to pursue research. Raymond stayed in his office, high in the Rockefeller Center building, while running the Coin Department of Scott Stamp & Coin Co. a few blocks away at 1 West 47th Street. Leonard Kusterer and others minded the coin store at Scott, while Raymond worked on editions of the *Standard Catalogue* and his magazine, *The Coin Collector's Journal*. Raymond was an astute buyer of coins, but did not enjoy retail sales to over the counter customers. He did, however, service the requirements of many important private collectors

13. Communication, April 8, 2019.

in the 1920s and 1930s, including Ambassador John Work Garrett, Colonel E. H. R. Green, William Cutler Atwater, and Waldo C. Newcomer to name just a few. He rarely visited other dealers in the city and is not known as a regular attendee of coin club meetings or conventions. Ford had an unusual inside track and was always warmly welcomed and invited to stay and pore through books and coins, even when other clients were there.

At the counter at Stack's, Ford came to know many of the prominent collectors of the day. In 1942 Stack's brokered the sale of the John H. Clapp Collection of coins from the Clapp estate to Louis E. Eliasberg for \$100,000, a figure tied with the 1922 sale by Knoedler Galleries of the Ellsworth Collection to Wayte Raymond and Ambassador John Work Garrett. Later in 1942 Ford began to prepare catalogs and mail bid sales of coins, one of which featured Downing's duplicate cents.

In the early 1940s for his own account, every few weeks John would take the train from New York City to Philadelphia, where he would make the rounds of the various coin dealers, including Ella Wright, who managed what was left of Henry Chapman's business (Chapman died in 1935 after an illustrious career). In 1942 he bought an immense quantity of 1942-P Proof nickels in narrow cellophane sleeves, thousands—so many that he still had a large supply a half century later. I helped with the marketing of what was left of these in the 1970s. Ira Reed and James G. Macallister were other sources in Philadelphia.

### World War II

In January 1942 John was drafted into the United States Army Signal Corps and was sent to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey for training (Fig. 6). He had hoped to become a glider pilot, but no positions were available. He came down with pneumonia shortly afterward and was hospitalized into the spring. He trained in cryptography—the decoding of secret messages sent by the Germans to and from their bases to submarines, ships, and others. After learning the basics of codebreaking, which came easily to him, John was sent to Plymouth, England, a major depot and port in the Allied offensive against Germany.

Although he did not participate in D Day, John went to continental Europe not long afterward and was in Paris in August 1944 when the Allies liberated it from the Nazis. Unlike many other European cities, Paris was relatively unharmed. The German occupation forces numbered only about 6,000 troops—enough, it turned out, to keep France under subjection. The Nazi forces enjoyed high life while in Paris. In October 1944 when the Allies took over Munich, Ford was on hand and, in addition to his military duties, collected souvenirs. Ford would later claim that he spotted a Nazi flag flying from a pole in Munich, atop



Figure 6. Ford in Germany in July 1945.

the City Hall, and at bayonet point he forced a captured German soldier to haul it down. In later years Ford kept it as a souvenir in his house in Rockville Centre along with other Nazi memorabilia from that dastardly regime.

In February 1945, writing from an APO box in Europe, he applied for membership in the American Numismatic Association and became member No. 11151 (Fig. 7). In early 1945 after Berlin was occupied he visited, Hitler's alpine retreat on Obersalzberg near Berchtesgaden (the nearest large town with a train station). In July 1945 he was stationed at the European Theatre Operations Communications Center in Paris during the Potsdam Conference.

All the while he formed a collection of Nazi badges, medals, and other small items, including some purchased later in America.<sup>14</sup> John enjoyed telling me about his service. Beyond that, in later years he was a student of World War II history and could relate details on all of the military battles in Europe, the strategies, and their commanders. He did not study the Pacific wartime theater.

### The Postwar Years

After the war John pursued several different activities, including working for Lever Brothers, the manufacturer of soaps and toiletries. There he worked in consumer relations. One day a lady contacted the firm and said that she had

14. Some of Ford's wartime accounts varied in the telling and could not be verified elsewhere.

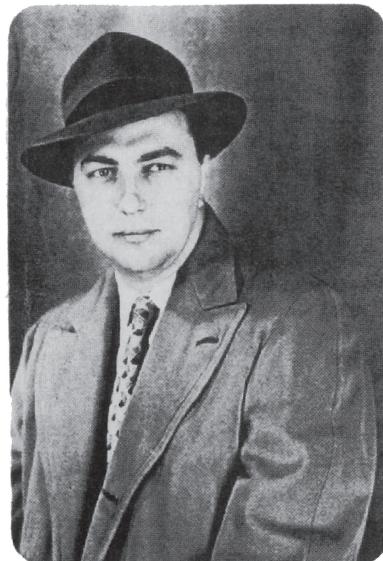


Figure 7. John J. Ford, Jr. partway into his numismatic career.



Figure 8. Joan Ellen MacDonald as pictured in the press announcement of John Ford's engagement.

cut her shoulder on a piece of razor blade embedded in a bar of soap. John was dispatched to see her, examined the lethal soap, and comforted and satisfied the lady with a gift box of Lever Brothers products.

Another enterprise was aerial photography over the greater New York City area, when he, as the passenger in a two-seat plane, would lean out of the window and take pictures. In this pursuit he was in a plane that crashed, but he and the pilot escaped unscathed.

The *Nassau Daily Review-Star*, the regional paper serving Rockville Centre and other communities, on April 24, 1947, reported this (Fig. 8):

Announcement has been made of the engagement of Miss Joan Ellen MacDonald, daughter of Mrs. Margaret Schwab MacDonald and Arch MacDonald of Detroit, Mich., to John Jay Ford, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. John Jay Ford of Rockville Centre.

Miss MacDonald was graduated from Central High School, Detroit, and studied merchandising at Wayne University there. Her fiancé is a graduate of South Side High School, Rockville Centre, and served overseas with the Signal Corps for 26 months. He has attended Adelphi College, Garden City.<sup>15</sup>

He married Joan and in time became the father of three daughters, Leslie, Susan, and, years later, Kimberly. He and Joan moved into a house in Levittown, Long Island, a vast housing development of look-alike buildings.

One of John's stories from that time involved a 1793 Chain cent that had an ugly surface. He stripped it down to bright copper, and put it outside on a windowsill to become toned naturally, a process hastened and augmented by wiping it carefully with a mixture of powdered sulfur and Vaseline. One day while he was away a team of painters swept through the neighborhood, putting finishing touches on certain of the houses. That evening John checked on how his cent was doing, but it was gone, but the windowsill was nicely painted.

In 1949 he ran a small mail-order business, including conducting mail bid sales. In that year Dr. William H. Sheldon's seminal *Early American Cents* was published, which Ford admired as the finest numismatic book written in the 20th century, Sylvester S. Crosby's *Early American Coins*, 1875, being the finest of the century before. He visited with Sheldon at Columbia University, but

15. This and many other citations from general (non-numismatic) media are by Julia H. Casey in connection with additional research for the present article, beyond what I did years ago. As to Adelphi, per a separate communication from John M. Kleeberg, he studied at Adelphi under the G.I. Bill and then quit.

I never heard much about what transpired. Sheldon did not become a close acquaintance.

In the meantime, certain interesting coins piqued his interest, and he endeavored to learn as much as possible about them. Topics of study included Confederate States of America cents of 1861 (his all-time favorite American rarity, he told me), the counterstamps L and E on certain quarter dollars of 1815 and 1825, and store cards of New York City. In the same year he inaugurated a column in *The Numismatist*, "Odds and Ends in the U.S. Series," which addressed things Ford found to be of interest. Soon, he was a contributor to Wayte Raymond's *Coin Collector's Journal*. His essays published there are still fascinating to read today. Absolute gems of numismatic writing and research include "The Confederate Cent" in the January–February 1951 issue and "The Bushnell Sale" in the next issue.

In later years he considered his financially deprived childhood to have been a great *advantage*. It taught him to look out for himself, as no one else was going to do it. I have to agree. It has been my observation that some of the most dynamic people in numismatics and in life are those who have cut their way through. I recall Ambassador R. Henry Norweb, a man with great inherited wealth, saying to me that being born with a silver spoon (although he did not use that term) was in many ways a disadvantage.

#### SECOND PORTRAIT: AN ILLUSTRIOS CAREER

##### New Netherlands Coin Co.

In the 1950s, basic information about rare coins was difficult to locate easily, apart from what might be found in the current edition of the *Guide Book*. Building a library of old books (there were not many new ones) was not an option, it was a necessity for anyone interested in gaining knowledge and expertise. Most dealers were *not* interested in such things, which provided great advantages for those who were. John contemplated going into numismatics full time, operating from his house.

Plans changed when in December 1950 he accepted the invitation of Charles M. Wormser, proprietor of the New Netherlands Coin Company, New York City, to become an associate. Charles was the son of Moritz Wormser, who had founded New Netherlands in 1936. The company name was to have been *New Netherland*, as in the old name for New York City, Ford told me, but, somehow, an "s" crept onto the end of the word when the first advertisements appeared, and the proprietor never changed it. Similarly, the New York fashion designer Lena

Bryant had her company name changed to Lane Bryant through an early typographical mistake, and never changed it. Ford was off-base with this, as *Netherlands* would have been proper usage.<sup>16</sup>

Moritz Wormser was widely admired as a collector and, later, as a dealer. In the 1920s he served an unprecedented six years as president of the American Numismatic Association. In contrast, at least in Ford's often-expressed opinion, his son Charles, a graduate of Yale, never did get the hang of the commercial end of numismatics. In reality, Charles had a good eye for coins and formed a collection that included coinage of England with a famous and rare Simon Petition Crown. He did many beneficial things, including helping Eric P. Newman become elected into the Council of the American Numismatic Society. In my many interfaces with him, he never complained about Ford. In addition to his numismatic accomplishments, Charles was a consummate gentleman, who loved nothing better than to take clients to lunch, such as Ambassador and Mrs. R. Henry Norweb, and *not* talk about coins. He was also a connoisseur of wine, including varietals made in the Northeast. If I recall correctly, Charles had a brother who was well known in the field of rare books.

Ford was a natural associate for Wormser, as he had committed to memory the details of many issues of American coins, tokens, medals, and paper money, knew where to find information he lacked, and had a trading instinct that was beyond remarkable—based on his activities since childhood. Ford felt that a coin was a piece of history that you could hold in your hand, a relic from years ago, bringing with it an aura of the American Revolution, the Civil War, the Panic of 1837, or the presidential administration of William McKinley. No matter, each coin had its own story if it could be unlocked.

Consider the naïve but well-moneyed coin buyer who wandered into New Netherlands. He might have been seeking a “rare” 1909-S V.D.B. cent or 1885 Liberty Head nickel, but once Ford was finished talking with him and acting in what he thought was the visitor’s best interest, he was apt to leave the premises with an invoice for Hard Times tokens. Ford did a lot of positive missionary work in converting casual buyers into specialists. When he wrote the foreword to my *Adventures with Rare Coins* book he told of convincing Ted Craige to buy Connecticut copper coins of the 1785 to 1788 era in addition to dates and mintmarks of Lincoln cents. Craige went on to be a frequent contributor to the *Colonial Newsletter* and to be regarded as a leading expert in early American coinage.<sup>17</sup>

16. John M. Kleeberg, comment, April 8, 2019.

17. I spent pleasant hours with him at his home and later purchased his Connecticut collection.

In 1952, after a couple years of simply doing business at New Netherlands, Ford determined to change the nature of the firm's auction catalogues and surround the offered coins with interesting and informative descriptions. This was done with good effect. The staff basically consisted of three people: Charles M. Wormser, the president of the company and the greeter of most customers (unless they had a technical numismatic interest), the company secretary Donna Neary, and John Ford. Ford's office was in the back toward the right.<sup>18</sup> Walter Breen, an up-and-coming numismatic scholar, who had been hired on a part-time basis, had a desk close to the back side of the one-way mirror, but was rarely there. Instead, he worked by making notes in the office for auction lots and doing his writing in his local apartment. However, on occasion he was on premises to examine and classify coins or to meet selected clients. Walter had absolutely no knack for selling anything, per Ford's and also my observations. Many people took advantage of him when he found something rare. In contrast John Ford was a consummate salesman and promoter—likely a candidate to sell a refrigerator to an Eskimo or a computer to Bill Gates. Ford, Wormser, and Breen had a love-hate relationship, in a way. Each often admired the others and also criticized them. Wormser kept his distance from Breen, who had unusual personal habits and predilections, and let Ford work with him.

Generally, when other firms (the three leading competitors were Stack's, Numismatic Gallery, and Hollinbeck Coin Company, not to overlook a number of smaller auction specialists) would use a half a dozen words, Ford building upon technical notes provided by Breen, would use a half dozen *sentences*. The value of the coins did not make a great deal of difference—it was their history and numismatic significance that came to the forefront. His first great accomplishment in this area was with the ANA auction catalogue in the summer of 1952, a joint effort involving four different companies. From there New Netherlands, with Walter Breen as an employee, went onward and upward, producing catalogues that mesmerized their recipients. The firm continually featured its Unconditional Guarantee and was promoted as having expertise exceeded by no other professional dealership past or present (Fig. 9).

Both Breen and Ford wrote in a staccato manner—a mile a minute, lots of text, but every word filled with information and with many abbreviations. RRR meant rare-rare-rare, or very rare; *fleur de coin*, a French term, meant Uncirculated. It was assumed that readers knew the first names and importance of Ten Eyck, Dunham, Gaskill, Ryder, and others, who were attached to pedigrees. As to rarity information for most federal coins, Ford had not studied their market

18. I do not recall ever seeing Ms. Neary's name in print. At the office she was always behind the scenes close to the desk of Charles Wormser and distant and out of sight of Ford.



Figure 9. New Netherlands Coin Company seal.

and availability much, although he could declaim for an hour non-stop on the history of each mint and tell all about dealers, collectors, and auction sales of past generations.

He left it to Breen to add details, which were often based on his examination of just a few auction catalogues—a world that did not include 90% of the catalogues issued by Thomas L. Elder, W. E. Woodward, B. Max Mehl, and other hobby icons. Breen could have cast a wider net for he had been employed by the American Numismatic Society for several months to prepare an index to their auction catalogs, including Elder, Woodward, and many others. It may have been the case that Breen did not have these within reach at New Netherlands or in his apartment in the city. Breen often committed information to memory. Although he was a polymath, he had many lapses and often forgot basic information. To this, John Kleeberg recently supplied this comment:

It is true that Walter thought he could rely on his memory and wouldn't go back and recheck things. Walter also claimed to have many talents he didn't really have, e.g., knowledge of foreign languages. I have seen very little evidence that Walter had any real knowledge of foreign languages. Also, the reason he had a masters in Sociology was because he had failed the oral exams for his Ph.D.—a master's degree is sort of a “booby prize” given to people who flame out over their orals. Moira Greyland's memoir of her parents, *The Dark Side of Avalon*, is a very dark and depressing book but also extremely revealing about Marion Zimmer Bradley and her husband Walter Breen.<sup>19</sup>

19. Communication, April 8, 2019, after reviewing a draft manuscript.

Further, if he did not have a fact, he often improvised and added information that appeared to be well researched. He stated that rare patterns and restrikes were made in Philadelphia by “Midnight Minters” in the early 1860s, when in fact, starting in the spring of 1859 Mint Director James Ross Snowden began this activity secretly during daytime hours in collusion with several others. Breen stated that well-known pattern coin collector R. Coulton Davis, a Philadelphia pharmacist, was able to get rare pieces by supplying Mint officials with laudanum. In reality, anyone, including a child, could walk into a drugstore and buy over-the-counter any opiates desired. Opium-laced Mrs. Winslow’s Soothing Syrup was sold for use to stop babies from crying. One of the great challenges of modern researchers is the examination of Breen’s extensive, marvelous, and highly informative writing to determine fact from fiction.

On the other hand, Ford did not invent “facts” relating to numismatic history or early American coins, tokens, and medals—his personal specialties. If he stated something, it was bound to be correct, although in a few instances, later research, not available to him, brought some changes. Over a long period of years I kept many notes on things that John told me, and just about everything proved to be correct. However, in comparing several accounts of how he began in the coin hobby in the 1930s, there are minor differences as to dates and people. The same is true for his recollections of certain people and events. I tend to view the older commentaries as being the most accurate.

Curiously, today a review of New Netherlands catalogues reveals very little in the way of true showcase rarities of the type that make print today—no 1804 dollar was ever presented, no 1913 Liberty Head nickel, no MCMVII Ultra High Relief \$20, and not much in the way of other landmarks. Those were apt to turn up in other venues, such as the Numismatic Gallery (Abe Kosoff and Abner Kreisberg, active until 1954, after which the partners went their own separate ways with success) or Stack’s, to mention just two competitors. I was a frequent bidder and buyer at New Netherlands as well as at Stack’s sales.

On occasion John would show me long galley proofs of his catalogues to look over and make suggestions. The catalogues were in galleys which were printed out on long sheets of white paper—as some readers of this book will remember if they did extensive printing in the era before computerization took over everything. John himself would mark up the sheets using ink, black or red, making marginal notes. The type was usually small and not easy to read quickly. Quite a few of the auction lots were described by Walter Breen on stationery envelopes and then edited by John, who would often put comments in the margin such as “Good!” not meant for the printer to change, but just to reflect to me when I saw the proof that this particular description by Walter was a gem of expertise in John’s opinion.

In the meantime, during many visits to New York City I was uptown at Stack's for their auctions. I often helped sort bid sheets, carry files from their office to the auction room next door in Steinway Hall, and to help out in other ways. New Netherlands and Stack's were strong competitors. Ford billed his company as "the distinguished numismatic firm." In many ways Stack's was like a coin club—as collectors and dealers often gathered there to "talk coins." While New Netherlands sales had their social side in and near the auction room, at their office I never saw more than one or two visitors at a time, and often I would spend a day with Ford, looking through coins to buy, and no one entered the reception area.

### Challenging John

I often enjoyed teasing John, or "tweaking" might be a better term. Although the New Netherlands business was conducted in a first-class manner, setting a high standard for authenticity, grading, and knowledgeable comments, it was fun to point out a few cracks in the façade, even though some searching was needed to find them.

Once John mentioned to me that he would never sell a *reprint* piece of currency from an old plate, and he vociferously decried someone else doing so. I then reminded him that years earlier in the New Netherlands showcase there were some modern reprints from old Chemicograph plates for Confederate notes. After turning slightly red and doing a double-take, John, as always, had an explanation: that originals were not available anyway, these were for educational purposes, and the proceeds, or at least part of them, were going to a university library.

In another instance he mentioned that he had never had a coin returned because it was proven to be false. Well, just about any coin dealer in business has had a problem with the unknowing purchase of a forgery or fake, but not New Netherlands, or so it was alleged. Scratching the deep recesses of my memory, I reminded John that he had told me that at one time he purchased a 1936 "Dot" Canadian cent, sold it, but later found it was a fake—and made an immediate refund. He seemed to have forgotten this. Of course, he was hoist on his own petard, as the saying goes, for I would not have known about it if he had not related the incident to me.

He also condemned in public many things he sold in private, such as rolls of modern coins in quantity to Harry Forman, First CoinVestors, and others. Anyway, this was good fun and good sport, challenging each other.

I don't recall the listing or whether it ever actually reached print, but at one time he had a Liberty Seated dime and described it something like this (I am taking literary license here to just give the idea):

1837 Liberty Seated dime. Choice Uncirculated. Lustrous and with attractive light blue toning. However, on second glance there is a scuff in the field, and a small tooling mark on the reverse...

There is nothing particularly wrong with this description, but I remember tweaking John about it, mailing him a “rewrite” that ran something like this:

1837 Liberty Seated dime. Choice Uncirculated. Lustrous and with attractive light blue toning. However, on closer glance we see several scratches on the obverse field and some tooling on the reverse. With an even higher-power magnifying glass we see that the coin has been holed and plugged. Then upon further contemplation the piece seems to have been artificially toned on both sides.

John thought this was hilarious, and telephoned me to say so.

### In the Sale Room

A New Netherlands auction, apt to be held in a hotel in New York City or some other venue (not in the firm's offices), was more of a social happening than a commercial event. Collectors came as much to meet, greet, and exchange information, than to bid. The atmosphere was usually electric.

At one event there was a marvelous collection of Hard Times tokens, anchored by multiple examples of the rare variety known as Low-1, with the portrait of Andrew Jackson. Ford was after some of these for his own account, and so was Don Miller, the latter also being a fine friend of mine, a criminal-defense attorney from Indiana, Pennsylvania. Miller was after one of the rarer sub-varieties of Low-1, as was Ford.

This particular sale was held high on the penthouse terrace of the New Weston Hotel at the corner of Madison Avenue and 50th Street, in which there were meeting rooms and also a bar, a setting ideal for a wedding reception or some other event. Don had a few drinks too many, and while passing a \$500 bill around to the bar patrons to whet their interest and curiosity, found to his consternation that it had disappeared—nowhere in sight, no one knew where it was. To this day it is still missing.

I don't remember all the details, but whatever happened, Ford and Miller became involved in a vicious argument and shouting match on the open terrace outside of the bar adjacent to the auction room. Miller grabbed Ford and pushed him against a low wall at the side of the terrace, with the street visible many floors below. A great struggle took place, and it seemed that Ford was about to

be thrown to eternity, when a bunch of bystanders, including me, rushed to the scene and pulled Miller away, in effect saving Ford. If Ford had nine lives and used one up in the earlier described private plane accident, a second was used here. Luckily, calmness soon prevailed and the auction continued as planned.

Perhaps because of memories from his impecunious childhood John would rarely treat others at a gathering of dealers. I recall that after one spectacular sale held by New Netherlands, he said to his dealer friends, perhaps a dozen in all, the big spenders in the sale: “Let’s all go to Mamma Leone’s for a late-night dinner. I know the ‘maitre’ and will give him a call to make a reservation.”

Ford had memorized the menu and also was well-known to the maitre ‘d there, who would often come by to chat. Before anyone ordered, John would say what was best and what should be ignored. At the restaurant we all had a good time. Then came the moment: the presentation of the bill to John, who seemed to be the host. John took the bill, checked the math (he always did this), then said, “Dave, your share is such-and-such,” and similarly to others around the table. About halfway through this, Abner Kreisberg, perhaps the most generous if not altruistic dealer I have ever met, stood up and said, “Hey, give *me* the check.”

### Coin Capers

Ford enjoyed teasing and playing tricks on people who did not have as much knowledge as he did—which, actually, included just about everyone. This was humbugging in the style of the much-admired Barnum. He was a virtual walking encyclopedia of numismatic knowledge. It would be very difficult to mention *anything* in the American or Canadian series for which he did not have information. He had other knowledge as well—from literature and history, although he never was educated beyond high school. He enjoyed tweaking dealers who did not recognize what he was saying. With great *savoir faire* he told a prominent Midwestern dealer that he was “mendacious,” and the listener basked in the compliment.<sup>20</sup> On another occasion he told a New York City dealer that his business methods were Machiavellian. Again, the recipient was flattered at receiving such praise. These stories are from John, as I wasn’t there when they happened.

Once he commissioned a friend and his wife to take an Uncirculated 1793 Chain cent into Stack’s, and show it to one of the proprietors, with some made-up story that the couple had just purchased an ancient, decrepit grist mill on a stream in Connecticut. While poking around the dusty premises they came upon a container brimming with hundreds of cents like this 1793.

20. John W. Adams, December 14, 2010, advised that this anecdote properly refers to numismatist George Clapp, who also used “mendacious” as his 10-letter cost code. In John’s retelling, I do not recall any mention of Clapp. In any event, it is another of John Ford’s “good stories.”



Figure 10. The original 1861 Confederate States of America half dollar bought as a bargain by Ford.

“Does this coin have any value?” the young man asked. Perhaps taken aback, but quite composed, the dealer took the offer in stride, commenting that things like this regularly came in and out of Stack’s, and that these pieces might be worth as much as \$5 to \$10 each.

The perpetrators of the hoax then returned to John, told him the story, after which Ford repeated it as often as he could. The market price for a cent of that type was certainly into the hundreds of dollars at the time. However, to be fair to Stack’s, probably any dealer confronted with the possibility that hundreds or even thousands of a former rarity might come to light would certainly offer much less than the full market value for a single coin viewed as a great rarity. Indeed, a similar but unrelated situation happened in 1962 when hundreds of thousands of 1903-O Morgan dollars, earlier worth \$1,500 or more each, came onto the market at face value and afterward traded widely at about \$20 each.

Along the line of the little caper with the 1793 Chain cent was a grander production, the creating of a “Republic of Texas gold doubloon.” Early Texas history was always a special focus for Ford, but the short lived government of the Republic of Texas, while it issued paper money, never did anything with coins.

Not a caper in the humorous sense, but a situation in which Ford used his superior knowledge to take advantage of another dealer, surfaced in 1967. Theodore Schnur, of White Plains, New York, paid Alice Clark of Greenwich, Connecticut \$75 when she brought an 1861 Confederate States of America half dollar to him, unaware of what it was. Schnur offered \$75 for it, and the offer was accepted (Fig. 10). He showed it to Ford, who verified it was a restrike made in



Figure 11. John Ford and Oscar G. Schilke as featured in the *Daily News*, New York, May 29, 1955. Ford is displaying Confederate States of America currency on the table and is holding a coin. Schilke, at one time president of the New York Numismatic Club, lived with his wife Olga in their retirement home in Niantic, CT. I visited them many times.

1879 and bought it for \$524, stating that he already had four restrikes and had no particular need of a fifth. At home, according to Ford's story to me, he studied it more carefully and determined it was one of four known originals. In actuality, as the reeded edge of a restrike is flattened as is the obverse of the coin, Ford no doubt recognized it instantly as genuine. Schnur, filed suit, claiming it was worth \$40,000. The case, joined by Mrs. Clark, went to the Supreme Court of the State of New York. After eight years of litigation it was settled when Ford paid Schnur and Clark 25% of the agreed upon value. Ford retained possession and years later when his collection was sold it crossed the auction block for \$632,500 (Fig. 11). He claimed that the coin had once belonged to CSA President Jefferson Davis.<sup>21</sup>

In 1956 Ford, enlisting the help of Walter Breen, decided to create some coins, apparently with F. C. C. Boyd joining in the fun (at least this is what Ford told me). Boyd, earlier a rare coin dealer, then a business executive with Union

21. There many versions of the Ford-Schnur incident in print. Ford, an expert on Confederate money, could have seen at the outset that the coin had a full reeded edge and, unlike the restrikes, was not flattened on the obverse.

News Co., was all the while a man of means who built a fine collection. He became a close friend to Ford in the 1940s, continuing until his passing in 1958.

Plans were carefully laid for the Texas go-round, and advertisements were placed in *The Numismatist* seeking authentic eight-escudo (doubloon) gold coins minted in South American countries during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. New Netherlands Coin Company wanted to buy these for stock, it seemed. Later, when some marvelous “Texas doubloons” were to appear, Ford planned to first state, “They came in with a shipment of South American gold—the kind of coins we have been advertising for.” The “Texas promotion” was revealed by Ford to an inner circle of dealers and clients, who were to keep mum. Mrs. Norweb advised him against it.<sup>22</sup> As far as I know, no word of the promotion leaked out.

Meanwhile, Walter Breen did research on what type of symbols, lettering, and inscriptions might have been used by the Republic of Texas had that entity created a punch for counterstamping existing Mexican and South American doubloons. Through John’s friend and sometime business associate, Paul Franklin, of Massapequa Park, New York, obverse and reverse dies were made, in Milan, Italy (so I was told), with appropriate appearance.

With regard to privacy, the project did not go as planned. Walter Breen, in one of his periodic non-speaking standoffs with Ford, told me all the details and said I could discuss it with Ford, who told me this was a prank, and that he would own up to it later, after which all would have a laugh. Ford promised that he would give me one of the doubloons. In the meantime, I was to remain quiet, as he wanted to circulate them around numismatic circles, and sit back and watch the reactions as they reached print. In particular, he wanted to dazzle Texas collector John Murrell with one. He looked forward to the day that this great “discovery” would be analyzed by researchers and written up in numismatic publications—shades of the *Novum Belgium* tomfoolery practiced by C. Wyllis Betts in the nineteenth century, when he created a “colonial coin” that Edouard Frossard, a leading dealer, trumpeted as being a marvelous new find. Murrell bought one, and Ford told him the story. Murrell did not believe that it was a modern fantasy and kept it. As far as I know, none of this behind-the-scenes activity leaked out to appear in print.

In April 1962 both *Coin World* and the *TNA News* published by the Texas Numismatic Association showcased this great discovery (Fig. 12). A second coin was found and was exhibited at the 1965 ANA convention. For *Coin World*, August 16, 1978, David T. Alexander wrote a lengthy article, “Texas Counterstamps Remain Mystery.” The authenticity of the two pieces was called into question as

22. Conversation years later with the author.



Figure 12. The two Republic of Texas doubloons as illustrated in *Coin World*. The subtitle included “Mysteries of Texas numismatics or modern creations?”

Alexander pointed out that there were many unanswered questions. As far as I know, Ford never publicly owned up to these. He discussed the doubloons with me in detail several times and was proud of the deception.

As stated, at least two Texas doubloons were made by counterstamping with the newly made die, but I never saw one in the flesh. Walter Breen was promised a trial impression on a base metal blank planchet (Ford was not about to give Breen a gold doubloon that cost hundreds of dollars to buy, before stamping), but never received it.

In time, word of these curiously counterstamped doubloons reached a latter generation of scholars, who perhaps with a degree of correctness called the whole thing a fraud. However, I knew it was done as a caper. It certainly did no good for his already shaky reputation.

#### At Home

Each day during this era Ford was a commuter on the Long Island Railroad, to and from New York City. He and most others grew used to the procedure and even enjoyed it, providing time for reading and catching up with inner thoughts

and plans. He lived in a two-story plus finished attic wooden house at 176 Hendrickson Avenue, Rockville Centre, out in Long Island, with his wife Joan and, eventually, three daughters. Somewhere in a New Netherlands catalogue there is a "Hendrickson Consignment," thinly disguising the owner. John liked to play games.

The Ford home was comfortable and sort of typical American—what one might find on a small lot on a street in a suburb where space is precious. The outside was painted a medium green. In later years he drove a Lincoln Continental that he bought from Abe Kosoff. It was usually parked in the driveway on the right side of the house. In the 1950s and 1960s, when there was a national movement to build bomb shelters, to stock emergency provisions, and the like, John built a huge and expensive shelter-coin vault underground, far exceeding the original cost of his house. In it he kept most of his rare coins and paper money. Few were allowed into the inner sanctum. In this facility, boxes of coins, envelopes, and other properties were put in racks, not in any obvious order. John gave me carte blanche to look at anything I wanted to, to pick up old envelopes from F. C. C. Boyd, Wayte Raymond, or anyone else, look at the coins, and ask about them. He also allowed me to photograph anything that I wished.

I had intended to write a detailed book on the Vermont copper coins of 1785 to 1788. (This was published years later in 2018.) In a visit to his home in early 1984 I brought along our company photographer, who at the time was Maureen Clark. We spent a couple days looking at John's Vermont coppers, during which he consigned his second best run to us for auction, one of many valuable groups of coins he consigned over the years—mostly duplicate or unwanted pieces from the F. C. C. Boyd and Wayte Raymond estates. I was permitted to measure, weigh, photograph, and study all the other Vermont pieces he had. In 1983 and 1984 he provided extensive help with the research I was doing on encased postage stamps.

During this time I was setting up Bowers and Merena Galleries in Wolfeboro, having purchased the assets and client base from General Mills, Inc., which had acquired the company earlier.<sup>23</sup> John Ford had 101 ideas on what we should do and how to go about it. George Fuld expressed an interest in joining us and mentioned that to John, who called and said it would be a bad idea, and that Carl

23. In the mid-1970s General Mills added about two dozen non-food divisions, including Eddie Bauer sporting goods, Pennsylvania House furniture, H.E. Harris stamps, Parker Brothers games, Red Lobster and Olive Garden restaurants, and more. They commissioned an outside firm to survey and rank rare coin dealerships. My company came in first, Superior Galleries second, and Stack's third. Jim Ruddy and I sold them 85% of the business in return for GMI stock. In 1982 they had a change of direction and began deaccessioning all of those companies.

Carlson, who worked for Herbert I. Melnick on Long Island would be a better choice. He also reviewed our inventory and items for sale and helped place some rarities with his acquaintances, including the finest known 1794 Starred Reverse cent from the John W. Adams Collection. We gave him a commission in each instance.

In the summer I was sworn in as president of the American Numismatic Association. John began a long stream of letters and calls on how the ANA should be improved. He wanted to involve me in a scrap he was having with a leading dealer who sold him an encased postage stamp that the American Numismatic Association Certification Service (ANACS) said was false. John had it further tested with X-ray spectography and confirmed this. The dealer refused to give a refund, and the ANA Board of Governors would take no action. Many other things could be mentioned regarding John and his seemingly private view, expressed to me, of the ANA. Meanwhile, the ANA often consulted him on matters of authentication.

If someone in the field of numismatic research was in need, Ford often would come to the rescue. One of his best friends was Dr. Douglas Ball, a fine gentleman whose main interest was in obsolete paper money, in particular the currency and bonds of the Confederate States of America. Doug was a consummate scholar, but, per John Ford's comment, "could not sell his way out of a paper bag." He had little or no commercial instinct. Doug wrote a book on the Confederate debt, which seemed to be about to lay a market egg, so esoteric was the subject. I remember John calling and asking if I could help with some of the publicity and to say a few encouraging words to Doug, which I did. While John was always ready to sell things, if he felt the recipient would actually do some reading, he would often give him old catalogues or reference books.

There were exceptions to his helpfulness to others. Dr. Joel Orosz, whose research articles and books have won awards, contacted JJF for help with information, but was told that the publications requested were not available. When the Ford numismatic library was auctioned by George F. Kolbe, the items in question were there indeed.<sup>24</sup>

Ford sometimes had difficulty seeing the big picture, straining at a gnat and overlooking a timber. I recall that a number of years back he consigned to us the collection of British colonial pattern coins he had acquired from the Boyd estate. The consignment, which also included other things, was valued by him at, say, \$50,000—the exact number escapes me, so this is illustrative. At the auction it brought, say, \$150,000, the overall result being far beyond his fondest hopes. However, one copper coin was either miscataloged or failed to attract

24. Joel Orosz to the author, June 15, 2013.

what he considered to be a reasonable bid, and sold for less than \$100, whereas Ford thought it should have sold for hundreds of dollars. For the next 20 years he reminded me continually of this particular coin, never mentioning the fact that his consignment overall broke many records. When a dollar of profit eluded Ford, he would never forget it.

While I never knew John to overcharge for anything he sold me during visits to New Netherlands Coin Company or later in his home, he certainly wanted to capture the full market price for anything he had that was unusual or rare. If someone bought something and immediately sold it for a profit, John could be unforgiving in his wrath. Steve Tanenbaum mentioned that Ford sold him his personal collection of shell cards, these being store cards of the 1860s and 1870s with an embossed brass (usually) design on one side—often copied after a double eagle—and, on the back, a circular cardboard disk, usually in some color, bearing an advertisement. John came up with what he thought was a generous asking price, and Steve Tanenbaum took the collection. So far so good. Then, in one of our auctions some rather common shell cards of Udolpho Wolfe and others sold for record prices, several times what we or anyone else thought they were worth. Ford was very angry and complained to Tanenbaum that he had “stolen” his collection of shell cards, quite forgetting that Ford set the price. This was John’s thinking, pure and simple.

Numismatic books, newspapers, correspondence, and files were tucked here and there in Ford’s home, usually in piles, but not sorted or arranged. John always talked of the future—of books he was going to write, projects he was going to do.

When I visited, which was quite often, Joan was always there. On one occasion in Rockville Centre a young man in tennis sneakers came to call on his daughter Susan. John quietly explained to me that Brian Dobbins was a popular basketball player on the high school team. Then, looking at the visitor, “What are you going to do, Brian, dribble your way through life?” All of this was in fun of course. Later, Susan became Mrs. Brian Dobbins.

Later, Brian would learn about coins and accompany John on trips to conventions. One summer day in San Diego, just before the ANA Convention, Brian, John, and I had lunch in a restaurant, and made some plans for the next day. John had a sudden heart attack, was rushed to a local hospital, and remained there until his recovery—which went well. Brian shepherded John, so to speak, during his hospitalization.

I remember an earlier time when Joan was pregnant with their third daughter, Kimberly. She had some blood restriction in her legs and could not move around, but over my protests insisted in making lunch. She always called her

husband "Jay." The nickname he liked his grandchildren to use was "Bompa," which he used years later on the license plate of one of his cars after he moved to Arizona. The oldest daughter, Leslie, was married to John Satenstein, who was in the securities business.<sup>25</sup> His family lived Upstate along the Hudson River. Very occasionally I would see him at a coin convention.

John had an interesting social persona. First and foremost he was a family man. Unlike many in the coin trade, he was never tempted by a lady of the night, nor did he lose his reason over too many glasses of ardent spirits. John did love red wine, had his favorite labels, and endeavored to educate others on the subject. John also loved cigars, preferably Cuban, and many were the boxes of such I paid for as a "tip" when he found me a rare colonial coin, or piece of paper money, by spotting it in some dealer's stock and directing me to its purchase.

Now and again John and Joan would take a vacation trip—but not often. Las Vegas was a favorite destination, sometimes in company with Philadelphia dealer Harry Forman. Werner Amelingmaier, a local automobile dealer, was a close business associate and often loaned John money needed for business deals, such as, on one occasion, a huge hoard of South African Proof sets.

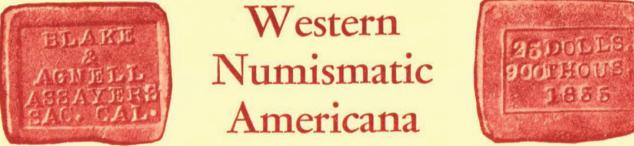
John Ford was a "health nut," so to speak. He recommended vitamins from Twinlab, with which he had some sort of acquaintance. Carrot juice was an absolute necessity, but would not keep well and had to be used when fresh. He persuaded me to buy a mechanical juice extractor, which I used a few times, then gave away as it took about 10 minutes to clean the screen after each use. He was also cleanliness freak, to use popular parlance. When we went to a restaurant he would always take a napkin and carefully wipe the seat before sitting down. When the menu was presented, John would tell those around the table what to order and what to avoid, even if he had never been to this particular place before. If there was a wine list he could give details about every listing.

Although I never saw it, he said he had a small facility in his garage for conserving coins. From Harry Forman he learned that hydrazine, a toxic and inflammable liquid, was the best thing to clean coins without friction or damage. One day he looked out the window to see smoke coming from his garage, after which he never used it again.

#### Ford, the Expert on Authenticity

Ford was very proud of the new discoveries of Western gold coins and ingots. In *The Numismatist*, July 1959, the New Netherlands Coin Company advertisement on the inside cover illustrated a Blake & Agnell bar and extensive text (Fig. 13).

<sup>25</sup> The Satenstein surname was later changed to Sanderson.



**Western  
Numismatic  
Americana**

**G**RADUALLY, during the past few years, we have become one of the most active, if not the largest dealer, in the pioneer and territorial gold field. Not only have we handled many of the better known rarities, but it has been our good fortune to devise a system of unearthing numerous unique pieces not previously known to Edgar H. Adams, Waldo Newcomer, Virgil Brand, Fred Boyd, or anyone else. In this connection, we might state that we have handled the most fabulous items imaginable. Some of them will appear for the first time in the new, thirteenth edition of the Whitman GUIDEBOOK; others will appear in the nineteenth edition of the STANDARD CATALOGUE next year.

Branching out from the regular privately-made gold coins, we were the first dealers to dig out, popularize, and deal in western assay ingots. In addition, we have scrutinized pioneer patterns and trials, unofficial coin dies, assay ingot punches, paper money privately made in the western states prior to 1890, and even bar and ingot moulds. Of late we have gone even further in our search of ANYTHING connected with the "Money of the West." We are keenly interested in the historical data and background contained in letters, correspondence, drafts, checks, broadsides, directories, and even contemporary newspapers. We own what could easily be considered the most comprehensive library on "Western Numismatic Americana" in existence.

*Pioneer gold, particularly RARE pioneer gold, requires top-notch clients. We found the coins and ingots—and we have found the customers. Our clients, mainly because they are our clients, are well informed. They know that we deal in documented facts, not fanciful conversation. If the item is GOOD, we can pay a GOOD price on their behalf.*

*It will pay you to contact us if you have any of the following items, or know where to locate them!*

- "Common" Pioneer or privately made gold coins in superlative condition; Ex. Fine to Proof.
- Pioneer Gold rarities in any condition.
- Unlisted and/or unpublished Pioneer Gold.
- Assay bars and ingots.
- Pioneer patterns and trials; in any metal.
- Western paper money, script, certificates, drafts.
- Any ephemera connected with the Numismatic West; from Assayer's letter punches to broadsides and even pertinent newspaper accounts.

IF IT'S WORTHWHILE, IT WILL PAY YOU TO DEAL DIRECT!  
(*Offers, appraisals, correspondence, transactions, in confidence*)

**New Netherlands COIN CO. • INC.**  
ONE WEST 47TH STREET • NEW YORK 36, N.Y.

Figure 13. 1959 ad in the *Numismatist*.

Should I point out that one of the dictionary meanings of *fabulous*, a key word in the advertisement, is “having no basis in reality; mythical”?

Ford remained the go-to person when questions concerning coin alterations and authenticity arose. His judgment was mostly, but not completely, unquestioned. His detractors were dismissed as being jealous of his knowledge, or being uninformed about the technicalities of numismatics, or both. Many articles about his prowess in detecting counterfeits and alerting the numismatic community and the public about them appeared in general as well as numismatic periodicals. This is from the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* published on May 6, 1962:

Collectors and dealers are warned not to buy any 1880 \$4 gold coins of the Flowing Hair variety without first having them positively authenticated.

John J. Ford, Jr. of the New Netherlands Coin Company, Inc., New York City, reports a series of six or seven transactions involving these coins in the past few months and points out that only 15 of the coins were struck. Most of these are off the market as they are in famous collections or institutions.

In 1966, Herman Schaden wrote a six-part series on the Smithsonian Institution that was datelined Washington, but reprinted nationwide.<sup>26</sup> In the third instalment, focus was on counterfeit coins with special focus on fake gold dollars dated 1850, 1853, and 1854. Some of these had been suspected, but when taken to the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia had been pronounced as genuine. It was Dr. Vladimir Clain-Stefanelli, curator of the National Numismatic Collection in the Smithsonian Institution, who “by using his instinct and, most scientifically, his X-ray diffraction machine,” confirmed their counterfeit status. The story continued:

Not all dealers were taken in so easily. Among the confirmed skeptics was John J. Ford, Jr., a New York dealer, who conveyed his suspicions to the proper authorities. And so the Secret Service hit the trail.

And a long-growing trail it was, reaching from coast-to-coast that fall and winter as one fast-moving salesman, assisted by a woman, peddled the bogus items to the gullible. The Secret Service caught up with Max Cohen in Dallas on Jan. 27, 1960. He was packing 285 of the

26. For example, in the *Daily Sentinel*, Rome, NY, October 25, 1966. The series initially appeared in the *Washington Star*.

phony pieces. Later, the Secret Service counted 300 others recovered from the several hundred believed sold around the country.

While Cohen, a New Yorker with a record, awaited trial on charges of possessing and passing the coins, the Secret Service dropped off some gold pieces at Dr. Clain-Stefanelli's office laboratory.<sup>27</sup>

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* ran "Foiling the Counterfeitors" on December 22, 1968:

During the recent meeting of the Professional Numismatists Guild in this city, two suggestions were made by John J. Ford, Jr. of the New Netherlands Coin Company of New York City which would go a long way toward reducing the amount of coin counterfeiting generally aimed at collectors.

Ford's first suggestion is for the Secret Service to establish a numismatic section with specially trained agents to detect counterfeit coins. All agents are now trained to detect counterfeit paper money but most depend on coin dealers when coins are involved. According to Ford there is extensive counterfeiting of old gold coins, and the admission of these into the country is defeating to a large extent the policy of the government to control the private ownership of gold.<sup>28</sup>

Ford's second suggestion is that there should be a correspondence course in the basics of coin manufacture which would enable dealers to learn how to detect counterfeits. Such a course, he said, would cut counterfeiting in half. Undoubtedly this could be handled by the American Numismatic Association....

In 1971 Ford left New Netherlands and afterward worked mostly from home. He was more active than ever—so much so that he hardly paid attention to his extensive library.

On a visit to see me at my home he admired a Swiss cylinder music box made by Mermod Frères in Sainte Croix, Switzerland, in the 1890s. He simply

27. These counterfeits were endemic in Europe as well, along with fake \$3 gold coins. In a trip to Zurich, Switzerland, in the early 1960s I saw examples on display at the numismatic departments of various banks. Upon helpfully mentioning their status—for such fakes were obvious to me—I was in all instance told, in effect, "Well, then, these coins are not for you."

28. QDB comment: This prohibited the holding of post-1933 gold ingots and Gold Certificates from all eras but did not apply to numismatic coins.

had to have one, and right away. I made a few phone calls and tracked one down at the dealership of Ruth Bornand in Pelham, an easy drive from Ford's home in Rockville Centre. Soon it was his, for several thousand dollars. The next time I visited him, there was the box, its lid closed, and piled high with unread papers and magazines. Another time he saw an old Mills Novelty Co. slot machine I had, and wanted one. I located a nice example for him, but years later it was still unpacked. Similarly, many of the books he bought in later life were never read but remained sealed in cardboard cartons. He was simply too busy.

John Munson was a "pet" protégé for a time, but was never molded into a full-time helper. Jon Hanson was especially highly admired and for a time in the 1960s worked for New Netherlands. I was a candidate for the protégé category for a brief time, but I always was independent, and did not automatically agree with everything John said. This was a negative, for John wanted a strong unwavering loyalty, no questions asked. Actually, this was not completely the case, for if a favorite researcher correctly challenged Ford and introduced new material or scholarship, Ford would be lavish in his praise. Otherwise it was sort of, "be quiet and listen." On several occasions he asked me to be his business partner, the ultimate compliment, perhaps. This never happened, but we were involved in a number of deals.

Imbued with a love for the American West, John convinced Joan that the family should move to Phoenix, Arizona, where he would build his Xanadu on a mountain overlooking the city. He bought a nice parcel of land next to property owned by Senator Barry Goldwater, and took me to see it one time when we were traveling together in the area. The idea was to have a home with every numismatic refinement possible—a wood-paneled library, a steel vault, and a room for the study and appreciation of coins, tokens, medals, and paper money.

The dream went on for a long time. In the meanwhile he enjoyed life in Rockville Centre. I visited there often. In the late 1950s he formed Ford Numismatic Publications with local automobile dealer Werner Amelingmeier as the financial backer after Ford got it going. His idea was to publish authoritative reference books on all American series, enlisting the research talents of Walter Breen, after which Ford would finesse or in many instances create the manuscripts. This got off to a fine start in 1958 with a new version of *Early American Cents*, retitled *Penny Whimsy*, with Walter Breen and Dorothy I. Paschal contributing to the original Sheldon work. Not much happened afterward. The firm's Numismatic Literature Mail Bid Sale of April 30, 1966, while rare today, is scarcely worthy of mention.

Besides his own personal collecting and dealing, he had his fingers in two other numismatic pies:

NASCA, based in Rockville Centre, was formed under the aegis of Ford and was envisioned as being a numismatic Utopia—staffed by world-class experts and turning out catalogues that were masterpieces of scholarship. Indeed, several luminaries were on hand, including Douglas Ball, Carl W. A. Carlson, and Martin Gengerke, among others. Ford fed a steady stream of consignments to its auctions and dictated many policies. I am not aware that it ever turned much of a profit. Today, its catalogues stand high for their scholarship and are a valuable addition to a fine library.

Stanley Apfelbaum formed First CoinVestors in Albertson, not far from Rockville Centre. This was a promotional outfit, mainly set up to sell coins to investors. For a long time, Walter Breen was an icon on the staff and readily signed various certificates and assurances to buyers. Ford did not have an equity interest, but sold a lot of “deals” to Apfelbaum, mainly things he was able to buy in quantity through his numismatic connections. Walter Breen signed endless certificates of authentication that were sent to customers. On occasion Breen obligingly invented pedigrees linking coins to famous numismatists of the past. Breen died in prison in California in 1993 after being convicted of child molestation.<sup>29</sup> It was Apfelbaum who, when accused of selling vastly overgraded coins, blamed professional dealers, stating that he had been “taken.” This sowed the seeds in the early 1970s for what became the American Numismatic Association Certification Service (ANACS). Apfelbaum worked with Abe Kosoff in the early planning.

### Personal Collections

While working at New Netherlands, Ford added greatly to his personal collection that he kept in a safe—later in the large underground vault—in his home.

In addition to Homer K. Downing, two of John J. Ford's mentors were Wayte Raymond and F. C. C. Boyd. Both lived in the area. Raymond was in New York City, with a summer place in Montauk, on the tip of Long Island, and Boyd, also with an office in New York City, lived in Ringoes, New Jersey. Raymond had founded the *Standard Catalogue* in 1934. After Raymond died, on September 23, 1956, many if not most of his American coins, tokens, and medals were purchased from widow Olga by Ford for his personal collection at a bargain, and some others were consigned for Olga's benefit to the New Netherlands Coin Co.

The latest edition of the *Standard Catalogue of United States Coins* was being prepared. Wayte Raymond's legacy was now edited by Ford and Walter Breen.

29. For a very disturbing inside view of Breen and his wife see the book, *The Last Closet: The Dark Side of Avalon*, by his daughter Moira Greyland. The reading is not for the faint-hearted.

Although it had many improvements, including information on the designers and engravers of various coins, the best was yet to come. Ford and widow Olga Raymond asked me if I would take over the primary editorship of the next edition, as Ford, who was in charge, felt I had the knowledge, and he could work with me. He was so busy with New Netherlands and building his own collection that he could not devote the proper attention to the project, he said. The arrangement never went beyond the discussion point, and after the 18th no later versions were ever issued. By that time the *Standard Catalogue* was attracting very few buyers, as in the marketplace it had been eclipsed by the *Whitman Guide Book*.

Olga was a fine lady. She lived in a condominium at Sutton Place in the Upper East Side with a view of the East River. I visited with her and bought some of the coins she had remaining from her husband's estate, including dozens of Philippine Proof sets of 1906 and 1908 still in their thin tissue paper wrappings as put up by the Philadelphia Mint. On a trip to the city some years later I and my family were staying at the Plaza Hotel at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Central Park South. There was a knock on the door, and a messenger from the F.A.O. Schwarz toy store delivered two stuffed animals sent by Mrs. Raymond for my young sons Wynn and Lee.

In St. Louis, Missouri, Eric P. Newman was an executive of Edison Brothers Stores and was also a consummate numismatic researcher. With great knowledge and skill he built a fantastic collection of American coins and paper money. He never seriously pursued tokens as they were not used as medals, per a question I once posed to him. Early American currency was a favorite specialty, and he wrote the standard reference on the subject, with that title—*The Early Paper Money of America*.

In 1958, F. C. C. Boyd, Ford's other mentor, passed away and was widely mourned. Eric Newman came to the funeral and rode in the same vehicle as widow Helen. Ford was on hand as well, as might be expected. For many years in the 1940s and 1950s both Newman and Ford were friends. Boyd had formed one of the finest holdings of early currency. Sometimes they would compete, but Boyd often convinced Newman to "lay off." In return, Boyd promised him that if ever time came to sell, Eric would have first chance.

Sometime after the funeral, Ford persuaded Helen Boyd to let him administer the numismatic estate. Helen accepted readily, as she knew Ford had been a friend for a long time. In a reprise of the Raymond scenario, most of Boyd's coins, tokens, and paper money were purchased by John personally, at what later proved to be pennies on the dollar. Other items were consigned for auction to the New Netherlands Coin Company. Many of Boyd's paper money issues were out on loan to Eric Newman for study. Ford requested their immediate return.



Figure 14. *Coin World* F. G. Hoard bar.

There is more to the story, as per this commentary from John Kleeberg: “The quarrel between Eric and Ford was not because of the Boyd paper. That is what Ford said, but it wasn’t true; he used that story to distract from the real reason, which was Newman’s exposure of Ford’s fake coins. It is true Eric wasn’t happy about the fact that Ford glommed onto all the paper. And it is true that Mrs. Norweb wasn’t happy when Ford glommed onto the Clapp-Würtzbach-Clarke-Boyd Massachusetts silver. But the cause of the actual rupture was the fake U.S.A.O.G. \$20s with Eric, and with Mrs. Norweb, the fake Mexican gold bars.”<sup>30</sup> This can be seen through the Newman-Ford correspondence, which is available for reading on the Newman Numismatic Portal. It remains friendly until the middle of the 1960s. Then it stops.

Also, Eric did Ford a great favor over the Boyd paper money. When the Boyd paper money was being kept at New Netherlands, some fool stole it. Fortunately, Eric had pictures and had cataloged it all. Eric supplied New Netherlands with his data, and the stuff was returned and the whole thing kept quiet. Without Eric’s help, the material would have been lost.”<sup>31</sup>

30. QDB comment: Mrs. Norweb, a close acquaintance, never mentioned the fake bars to me, but they were exposed and well-known. Ford stated they were genuine, etc., etc.

31. Communication after reading a manuscript draft, April 8, 2019.

New discoveries included a gold bar by F. G. Hoard, an assayer in Amador County, California (Fig. 14). The county name is misspelled as AMEDOR. The fineness of 999, or near purity, is not known to have been achieved by any Gold Rush assayer. Aspects such as these caused some finds to be questioned.

The two became enemies. Each described the other as a rascal to friends. Eric's reputation as an author and scholar was vastly overrated according to John. Some of John's marvelous new discoveries of hitherto-unknown Western coins and ingots were of highly questionable authenticity according to Eric. The two did not speak or write in later years. I knew both of them well, and at a convention in which John scheduled to give a program about the danger of counterfeits of federal coins, Eric and I were chatting. I asked Eric if I arranged it with John, would he attend and at least say hello. He agreed. I then went to John about the matter and was told than under no circumstances would that take place. So it did not.<sup>32</sup>

In the meantime, over a long period Ford consigned a large number of rare coins, patterns, and a tremendous amount of Postal Currency and Fractional Currency notes to my companies for auction, realizing large sums that he used to buy other items for his collection on the open market, including in the Garrett Collection sales of 1979 to 1981.

Among the highlights of the Garrett Collection, much of which was formed in the nineteenth century by T. Harrison Garrett, whose family controlled the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, was a group of the first patterns for federal American coins. Minted in silver in 1783 and lettered NOVA CONSTELLATIO ("new constellation") referring to the galaxy of 13 original colonies, these were proposed as issues for the National Mint. That institution did not materialize at the time, and the coins were retained by Charles Thomson, secretary of the Continental Congress. Set to cross the auction block were four pieces, the first being lot 619, the "cent" or "bit" coin. One of John J. Ford, Jr.'s business friends, Herbert I. Melnick, of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Service Corporation of America (NASCA), was tapped to be the straw man or secret bidder for Ford. Both men were among those seated in the front row. As the coin came up for sale, Ford put his hand up, but after a little run, withdrew it, indicating to watchers that it had exceeded what Ford considered to be a reasonable price. At that point Melnick, seated about 15 feet away, entered the fray—and continued until he was awarded the coin for \$97,500.<sup>33</sup>

32. When reading the draft of this article, George F. Kolbe wrote, "JJF once expressed regret to me about the state of affairs with EPN."

33. An account of this, except for the bidding melodrama, can be found in "Ford Reassembles Set of First U.S. Coins," by Margo Russell, *Coin World*, January 1, 1980. Russell



Figure 15. The 1783 1,000 units "mark" was a highlight of the Garrett sale.

Next up was the 500 Unit silver coin. Ford entered the bidding earlier, ran it up, then stopped, at which point the scenario was repeated. The disappointed Ford watched as Melnick took the lead. Then Melnick dropped out. Ford panicked. "Don't stop," he called over to Melnick, who must have misinterpreted his bidding instructions. Ford, to the amusement of all watching, took over and was the buyer at \$165,000. The following coin, lot 621, was another variety of the 500 Unit coin. Ford bid, but dropped out and it went to Walter Perschke, a Chicago dealer, possibly because of a slipup in bidding—I don't recall.

Then came the last of the coins, the 1,000 units or mark, which Ford bid up to and won at \$190,000 (Fig. 15).

#### The Recognized Expert

In the 1960s the rise in coin prices brought problems with it. Burglaries and other thefts increased, and dealers and collectors had to become increasingly aware. A casual comment to a stranger might lead to unfortunate consequences. Counterfeits of American gold coins, said to have been made mostly in Lebanon, popped up at conventions and elsewhere and caused great concern.

Ford, widely considered to be one of the best experts relating to authenticity, saw fake 1850- and 1851-O gold dollars at first, followed quickly by those dated 1852, 1853, and 1854. Before long, phony \$3 coins were around also, offered to New Netherlands Coin Company, Stack's, and gold specialist Ed Shapiro.

Ford grabbed the gauntlet and publicized the threat, members of the Professional Numismatists Guild were alerted, and notices were sent to the *Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* and *The Numismatist*. The counterfeit coins were struck and Ford relate the numismatic background and importance of the coins. For further details regarding the coins see the Bowers and Ruddy Galleries catalog; Carl W. A. Carlson, "Woodward and Garrett," in *The Numismatist*, January 1980; and Bowers, *The Whitman Encyclopedia of Colonial and Early American Coins*.

from dies and had microscopically granular surfaces, easily differentiated under a high-power glass, while the reeded edges were more boldly defined than on the genuine. This was the first really large scale wave of American numismatic counterfeits, but there would be a lot more to come. In the next several years Ford was the central point for reporting fakes and disseminating information about them. In 1973 Ford was presented with the first PNG Founders' Award, its highest honor.

In the January 1983 issue of *The Numismatist* he pointed out that a \$20 gold ingot purported to have been made in by John D. Parsons in Colorado in 1860 and described in the issue of the previous September was an out-and-out fake.<sup>34</sup> Ford was also the go-to person for the Professional Numismatists Guild when questions of authenticity arose. The PNG planned to hold its first stand-alone convention at the Palmer House in Chicago from March 5–7, 1965. Among the speakers at the Palmer House was Ford, billed as a star attraction, who lambasted the American Numismatic Association for, in his opinion, doing nothing to combat fakes and counterfeiting, or to promote the hobby, and generate information. This provoked a heated exchange with ANA governor Charles Johnson, with other audience members joining in. Ford was riding high and paid no attention.

In 1987, John and Joan Ford moved from Rockville Centre to Phoenix, Arizona. His house at 176 Hendrickson Avenue was a white elephant on the market, as the combined bomb shelter and underground vault doubled the price. I put a notice about its availability in an article or in the *Rare Coin Review*, thinking that a numismatist with a large collection might want to buy it. The house was later sold at a reduced price through a broker.

The Fords then moved to nearby Scottsdale. Most of John's reference books and other items remained packaged in cartons or wrappers, unopened and unsorted. Preparing scholarly reference books on territorial and gold coins, encased postage stamps (one of his favorite specialties), Indian peace medals (another in the front row), colonials, and others would happen someday, but in the meantime he still gathered information.

In the 1990s Ford minimized his numismatic activities, but was ever willing to share research and other information with me. He visited occasional conventions and gave several programs, usually of reminiscences. Friendships were maintained with some of his favorite numismatists, including John W. Adams, Mike Hodder, and Bob Schuman, to mention just three. I visited him a few times in Arizona and was always greeted warmly. Once, a group of us went to see *Jurassic Park* in one of his favorite theatres. Lavish Sunday brunches at a Scottsdale

34. Other questionable Parsons bars have appeared as well. See the Moulton text.

resort were another memorable routine. His daughter Susan and her family had moved to the area, and he and Joan saw them often. In the meantime he telephoned me every week or two. Western coins and ingots were never discussed.

He never built his Xanadu. I don't know what happened to the property he bought years earlier, next to one owned by Barry Goldwater. "Someday" never happened, and the numismatic community is the poorer for it, for his knowledge of numismatic Americana was unmatched by anyone I have ever met.

### THIRD PORTRAIT: THE REST OF THE STORY

#### Western Americana

In 1950 at a meeting of the Brooklyn Coin Club, Ford had made the acquaintance of Gerow Paul Franklin, known by his middle name, who lived at 964 Amsterdam Avenue in New York City (in 1955 the Franklin family moved to Massapequa Park, New York, not far from John's home in Rockville Centre). Paul Franklin was a highly skilled mechanic and technician and was able to discuss the making of dies for tokens and medals and the striking of them. Often Ford would have a question about how a coin was made, or an alloy was crafted, and Franklin could either provide the answer or obtain it somewhere. Franklin was first and foremost a treasure hunter and collector of old guns.<sup>35</sup> Of Franklin's earlier life, more will be said.

Ford and Franklin shared an interest in Western Americana. Ford showed him old business directories from San Francisco, Sacramento, and other Gold Rush era cities, and enlisted his help to track down leads he had received from the brochures and advertisements he published. Franklin reported great success, including, as Ford told me, tracking down information that led him to visit a descendant of Western assayer Gorham Blake, who in the 1850s had formed a reference collection of gold coins and ingots. The heir, who lived in or near Boston (Franklin would not reveal the exact location to Ford), sold him some spectacular rarities, hitherto unknown, including three examples of a \$5 gold coin struck in 1849 in San Francisco by J. H. Bowie and a Blake & Co. \$20 gold coin depicting a coining press, and other delicacies (Fig. 16). Ford told me he was thrilled.<sup>36</sup>

35. John Kleeberg suggests that Franklin in his trips to the West may have been engaged in the black market for then-illegal bulk gold. Communication, April 8, 2019.

36. Upon reading this, John Kleeberg commented: "This is not true. The two men conspired together to make forgeries, and they knew from the beginning that the pieces were fake." Communication, April 8, 2019. Separately concerning the Bowie \$5, its first known appearance was in the *Los Angeles Corral Westerners' Brand Book No. 9*, 1961, included "Pioneer Gold Coinage of the West," a 48-page article by Clifford, who distributed copies to many of his friends.



Figure 16. The newly-discovered Blake \$20 gold coin excited the numismatic community and was soon listed in the Guide Book.



Figure 17. A hitherto unknown experimental format U.S.A.O.G. \$20 coin of octagonal (l.) instead of the usual round (r.) shape.

Franklin's find of finds, the high point of his treasure hunting according to Ford, took place in the mid-1950s when he was visiting Arizona. According to one account told by John, he found a bank teller who had a marvelous 1853 United States Assay Office of Gold \$20 coined in San Francisco, with a mirrorlike surface (Fig. 17). Franklin was beyond excited, for the typical grade for such a coin was About Uncirculated or slightly higher. The present quality was unprecedented. Franklin bought it for \$100, according to Ford's recollection—a coup, as an Uncirculated example was worth a thousand dollars or more at the time.

Franklin went back and forth from East to West and, according to Ford, visited the teller a couple more times, securing additional prooflike \$20 coins,



Figure 18. United States Assay Office of Gold pattern or experimental \$20 coins on display at the Smithsonian Institution as photographed by the author on March 7, 1978. These new discoveries attracted much attention.



Figure 19. Previously unknown gold ingots by Argenti & Co. and Adams Express.



Figure 20. One of three J. H. Bowie \$5 coins found in the late 20th century. No such coins were known prior to the Ford discoveries.

patterns, experimental pieces, and other gold items at slightly higher prices of \$150 to \$200 (Fig. 18). In late summer 1957 he bought a spectacular \$50 ingot of the United States Assay Office that was round in shape rather than octagonal, the last being the format of all known examples. Ford said he paid Franklin \$3,000 for it, and sold it to Stack's, who resold it along with many other Ford discoveries to pharmaceutical executive Josiah K. Lilly. Today these are in the National Numismatic Collection in the Smithsonian Institution (Fig. 19).

A Bowie \$5 coin, a new discovery, illustrated in the catalog of the New Netherlands Coin Company auction of 1963, with this comment: "We found the coins and ingots—and we have found the customers. Our clients, mainly because they are our clients, are well informed. They know that we deal in documented facts, not fanciful conversation" (Fig. 20).

Why three Bowie \$5 coins were found, but only one was announced, is not known. Afterward the other two appeared.<sup>37</sup> Ford encouraged Franklin to find out where all these coins originated and the extent of others that might be available. One way or another, Ford thought he was able to learn details. He learned from Franklin that certain rare United States Assay Office of Gold coins, ingots, and even patterns came from a man who had been a bank teller years earlier in 1934, when the public was commanded to surrender gold coins. The teller paid for them out of his own pocket, and hid them away, not even telling his relatives about the coins. In December 1958, Franklin was able to buy the remaining pieces, plus some test strikes and patterns, some or all carefully preserved by wrapping in a white handkerchief. All told there were seven of the 1853 \$20 coins, which Walter Breen and John Ford agreed were Proof strikings. It seems that someone connected with the Assay Office in the 1850s had saved these pieces, after which they descended to the citizen who turned them in at the bank window.

Later study of the Ford-Franklin relationship, especially the research done by Karl V. Moulton, suggests that while Ford liked to keep his sources secret, Franklin did likewise. Where exactly Franklin found certain hitherto unknown Western ingots and coins is not known. This program was inconsistent. For example, Ford stated that hitherto unknown Knight & Co. bars were found by Carlton Wells on a hunting trip who saw a flash of light on the other side of the Sacramento River. Whether Franklin made up stories such as the New England heir to assayer Blake, or whether Ford did may never be determined. Were *any* of these stories true?

37. One was illustrated on the cover of *The Numismatist* in 1983 and the other was sold in 2001 with material from Franklin's estate.

Of this scenario, John Kleeberg commented after reading an early draft of the present manuscript:

This is not hard. Franklin was a brilliant worker in metals. We know that from the achievements of gunsmithing he had done as long ago as 1943. And when it came to making up stories, no one was better than Ford. Ford made up the stories and marketed the phony pieces, and Franklin did the work of making the stuff. Ford couldn't keep his stories straight, so his stories of the Franklin hoard varied a lot—there's a letter he wrote to *The Numismatist* in 1963 that has the first published account of the so-called Franklin Hoard—it's different in several significant points from his later version.

John J. Pittman reached the conclusion that Franklin was making the stuff and Ford doing the marketing as long ago as 1958. Harry X. Boosel discovered the same when Franklin offered him an entire box full of Saudi Arabian gold 4-dinar disks. I know that Eric Newman was also of the opinion that this was the division of labor—Franklin was able to do the metalsmithing, and Ford the research and the marketing. As is typical with forgery rings, the bulk of the profits ended up with the person who was nervy enough to market the stuff, rather than with the actual craftsman. This also happened with the recent Knoedler forgeries of the paintings of the modern New York school of Abstract Expressionism.

Was Ford trying to throw me off track by stating that the discoveries were completely new to him, as in the late 20th century I had questioned a few things such as the Agnell/Agrell discrepancy. In any event, to set me on this wild goose chase John challenged me to spend time searching for the Blake heir, source of the three 1849 Bowie \$5 coins and other hitherto unknown rarities. He said that he had already checked Massachusetts telephone directories and had contacted likely Blake possibilities, but to no avail, leaving the possibility that the descendant may have had a different surname.

In 1981 Donald H. Kagin, who had earned a doctorate awarded by Roosevelt University in Chicago in a curriculum designed by his father Arthur M. Kagin, had his book, *Private Gold Coins and Patterns of the United States*, published by Arco. Ford had engineered this with Arco, who had published other numismatic books (by Don Taxay) as also arranged by Ford. John told me that he had provided nearly all of the research information in the book. His Western discoveries of coins and ingots were described and illustrated, thus in a way making them "official."

Seeking to lay to rest any questions about the Bowie coins, Ford inspired Kagin to write a feature article, "J. H. Bowie: Maryland's Private Gold Coiner," which was printed in *The Numismatist* in September 1983, which illustrated the \$5 coin on the cover. Ford could then say that gold coin expert Kagin's research proves it is authentic.

Significant in the quest to sort out Ford vis-à-vis Franklin, as far as I know, Ford never told of personally finding an unlisted rarity. If he had, surely he would have expanded greatly on the situation. Instead, as he steadfastly maintained, most if not all details came from Franklin.

I must admit that I was not in the center of discussion about the Ford-Franklin finds and beyond a few discussions did not spend much time thinking about it. Concerning items illustrated in the Kagin book, I told him that I thought any and all gold items that were .999 fine (999/1000ths pure) from the Gold Rush era should be studied more carefully as Moffat & Co. and the San Francisco Mint in the 1850s had a challenge to refine gold to .900 fine, never mind anything higher.

I had other questions about of an exhibit of Western numismatic and other items he had prepared for the Bank of California in San Francisco. I had seen it and to me some of the pieces did not look right. I mentioned this to him, and I was berated for questioning any aspect of these. In looking back on this, I think this and other probing questions raised a wall between John and me as he viewed me not as an enemy out to discredit him, but as an uncooperative contrarian. For better or worse, I was not a party to his later interfaces and controversies with various scholars. Still we remained fine friends.

In retrospect I should have joined the coin controversy when it first emerged on the numismatic scene.

### A \$20 Gold Coin Questioned

In the early 1850s, Moffat & Company, a private minter and assayer of gold in California, received a federal contract to operate the United States Assay Office of Gold. In the time before the San Francisco Mint opened (in March 1854), the U.S.A.O.G. supplied many coins, mostly of the \$20 denomination, for use in regional commerce (Fig. 21).

The earlier-mentioned Proof 1853 twenties were delivered to Ford, who kept two, and the other five were sold through New Netherlands, one going back to Franklin, another to Ford's friend and customer, automobile dealer Werner Amelingmeier, one to California pioneer gold collector Henry Clifford, and the other two to names I do not know. Others were sold, including one to John J.



Figure 21. One of the United States Assay Office of Gold 1853 \$20 coins.

Pittman, who expressed doubts and asked for a refund, which was given after some difficulty. Important to the present account, another went to Thomas Ryan.

Ryan, a former vocalist with Tommy Dorsey's band, who switched careers and opened a coin shop in Chicago. Ryan sold it to Paul E. Garland, a collector and dealer in Tennessee, later (1983) the author of *The History of Early Tennessee Banks and Their Issues*. Garland enjoyed owning the piece, but upon study questioned its authenticity as a coin and its further status as a Proof. He showed it to a numismatist, who agreed with his findings. Garland became incensed, felt he had been cheated to the nth degree, and resolved to do something about it. Word reached Ford, who offered a refund to the person to whom he sold it, and, in face of lawsuits and the like, other dealers who handled it before it reached Ryan agreed to do the same. But, at the end of the transaction line, Ryan refused. He wanted the matter to be exposed.

A *cause célèbre* erupted, Garland wrote to numismatic editors, to congressmen, and others, seeking relief from what he considered to be a fraudulent transaction. The matter finally ended up in 1966 and 1967 in arbitration under the Professional Numismatists Guild rules, *Garland vs. Ryan*. I discussed this with Ford, who enlightened me on the background, stating that it was a witch hunt. I was not told who the arbitrators were or would be. I declined to participate.

Consultants entered the arbitration, with Eric P. Newman describing in detail the coin to be false, backed up by some others, and Ford and his supporters defending the coin and claiming authenticity. One "problem" for Ford was that Newman was an extremely meticulous and careful researcher, and when he wrote about something, such as in his books and articles, his work was considered definitive. Paul Franklin was asked to give details as to his finding certain

pieces, but did not do so. Ford said to the committee that dealers always protect the sources of their coins. Ford was given a year to prepare a report. In what became a famous non-decision of sorts with a 113-page report, the judgment was issued in 1968 by arbitrators Ronnie Carr, Lester Merkin, and Herbert Bergen.<sup>38</sup> This did not discuss genuineness at all, but found only that the coin was not a Proof. Ryan was ordered to make a refund. I later learned that Dr. George J. Fuld used an X-ray spectrometer to analyze the coin and said it had the molecular pattern of a modern coin.

Matters were not improved for Ford when Professor Theodore V. Buttrey, curator of the numismatic collection at Yale University, condemned Ford-found Mexican gold ingots and in a lecture at the American Numismatic Society in 1996 condemned Ford's Western America bars. In *The Numismatist* in February 1994 the authenticity of the U.S.A.O.G. prooflike twenties was condemned by J.P. Martin, one of the experts of the American Numismatic Association Certification Service (ANACS). At the Professional Coin Grading Service, John Dannebrenner studied the pieces, after which PCGS would not certify or grade them. Robert Leonard did important research as well.

Not making matters better were modern silver ingots made in Phoenix with the imprint of the Thorne Mining Company. These were widely sold in the marketplace, until they were studied by skeptics. Karl V. Moulton summarized the situation:

There were several assayers in Phoenix at the time Franklin "discovered" many of his gold ingots and coins. Two were Charles Diehl and Jack Stone at the Arizona Assay Office. Long time assayer Diehl could have easily been able to make numerous false gold ingots. In 1955, he told Franklin to visit Goldfield, Nevada (where Diehl had been an assayer in the teens) and check for old assay bars, while Stone actually made silver ingots for distribution by Franklin beginning in 1969. Treasure hunter Lee Hedgpeth had Franklin stay with him during his visits when Franklin was in his car on vacations. Milton Rose was also a treasure hunter and reportedly "discovered" the fake Father Kino bars in the 1940s. These people lived around the Phoenix area in the 1950s and 1960s; and they all knew Franklin and had interactions with him.

38. Merkin was a well-known and highly-admired New York City dealer, but was not known for his technical expertise; he hired Walter Breen and others to do this. Ronnie Carr was among the experienced specialists in Gold Rush era numismatics. Herbert Bergen, of Fullerton, CA, was a highly respected collector and member of the ANA Board of Governors as well as having been elected vice president and president. I knew Merkin and Bergen very well and was acquainted with Carr.

Also in Phoenix was a wealthy collector, Kenyon Painter, Jr., who had a lengthy background in numismatics and was an avid and well-informed specialist in Western gold items. In May 1956, Painter had visited with John J. Ford in New York (perhaps at the urging of Franklin) where these two men first met each other and discussed fake Father Kino silver bars being made in Phoenix. However, the three primary ingots they discussed during that meeting were American issues from the Thorne Mining, Silver King, and Eagle Mining bars that were all part of the "Franklin Hoard" and are now considered modern fakes.

In February 1958, when the U.S.A.O.G. "Proof" \$20 gold coins were first offered by Ford, the story goes that Franklin had met a retired bank teller who had saved them in 1934, wrapped in a handkerchief, etc. This Ford story was written in Ford's 1967 P.N.G. document to confirm authenticity of those pieces. In reality, here is the documented evidence that is known regarding these "transfer die forgeries."

In February 1958, Franklin was notified that there would be some U.S.A.O.G. material available in Phoenix. Whether or not the specifics were outlined at that time remains unknown. This is because this communication was done by telephone, rather than in a letter. Ford and Franklin were in New York City, and Ford, due to cataloguing obligations for the New Netherlands sale No. 51, requested that Franklin fly out to Phoenix to pick these items up for him. Ford would cover all expenses.

Franklin agreed and made arrangements to make a four-day trip (Wednesday to Saturday) to Phoenix. He flew out on February 19th, stayed in a motel, and on the 21st, had dinner with two others that were not mentioned by name. At that dinner Franklin acquired the seven "Proof" \$20s, and who knows what all else. In any event, in the morning of the 22nd, Franklin called Ford and told him there were seven of the U.S.A.O.G. \$20 "Proof" gold coins to sell.

Ford wasted no time, and wrote, a letter to Henry Clifford asking, "*Would you be interested in a "Proof impression of the U.S. Assay Office \$20 of 1853, 900 Fine? In gold of course, and absolute perfection!*" He had written to Clifford the previous day and was not aware at that point, of what Franklin was getting. **THE VERY SAME DAY**, Ford wrote to Abe Kosoff, "*Could you handle an 1853, \$20., U.S. Assay Office, 900 Fine in Proof? We have located at least one (we hope), in the hands of a descendant of one of the Curtis, Perry and Ward owners.*"

John J. Ford hadn't even seen these coins yet! He was only going on Franklin's description. When Franklin returned to New York, on the 24th, Ford, as promised, cashed out 41 of his savings bonds that he had from selling a questionable J.J. Conway "trial" overstrike on a reeded edge U.S. half eagle, from a previously unknown die to Kagin for \$3,525 in November 1957, to cover the expense for the seven coins. Franklin's expenses were an additional \$341.01 to cover his trip.

On Franklin's "invoice" to Ford, he wrote that there were three for dinner on his second day (21st). While there were no names mentioned, a May 12, 1958, letter from Franklin to Painter stated, "I am sending to you this date under separate cover 1 (one) 1861 Clark Gruber and Co. twenty dollar gold piece. This is in exceptional condition and is the one I mentioned when I saw you in February..." This was one of a very few Franklin letters that Ford kept a copy. Therefore, it can be logically presumed that Painter was one of the people that had dinner with Franklin on February 21st. The other would have most likely been Charles Diehl, one of Franklin's oldest connections in Phoenix. If so, an important source of the false material that came out of Phoenix in particular, came from these two men who lived in Phoenix and could have spent hours together in the creation and manufacture of false material from the previous century Gold Rush and early Spanish missionaries and explorers.

Between 1956, when Painter first met Ford and discussed "Boys making AZ bars in Phoenix and other U.S. Fakes" (Ford's words), and 1958, after numerous fake gold bars had been "found" by Franklin, and had been authenticated and sold by Ford, before the U.S.A.O.G. "Proofs" even appeared; it would appear that these two men (Painter and Diehl) could have had a partnership making items for Franklin to take back to Ford to sell. It is entirely possible that Painter was actually the person responsible for numerous fakes, as he would derive a good deal of pleasure (much like Ford) seeing the sale of the pieces and reading the marketing stories that came out afterwards. He didn't need the money.

Interestingly, Painter was in Los Angeles the following weekend, attending the Numismatic Association of Southern California show, where he met Henry Clifford and sold him seven silver ingots. *"Five were mission pieces from Arizona-Sonora"* (these were most likely Father Kino fakes). Another was a "Virtue G&S Co., with A. Taylor Assayer and A.T. for Arizona Territory" stamped on it, 999 Fine. This narrow,

rather sloppy bar (with the letter "Z" stamped 10 times or so, crossing out the originally stamped weight), was one of the earliest bars brought back by Franklin in 1953, and was sold to Don Keefer by John Ford, who then bought it back after Keefer's passing in 1954. It apparently was re-acquired by Painter for reasons unrecorded. Could it have been because it was not that authentic looking due to the overstamps? Probably. In any event, it never entered the numismatic marketplace until it was sold in the 1982 Henry Clifford sale.

Several of the "connect the dot pedigrees" include Kenyon Painter, Jr. in the fakes being made in the Southwest picture, especially after Painter received of copy of the Edgar Adams books on private and territorial gold which had several misspelled names which ended up on Ford-sold ingots found after 1956 (e.g., Argenti and Agnell). Together, both Ford and Franklin visited Painter after his first visit with Ford in 1956.

Further evidence of Painter knowing about Western fake material can be seen in Eric P. Newman's notes from when he visited with Painter in July 1968. He specifically mentioned "*All of the U.S. Assay Office on page of Clifford book is bad. This page has round \$50 U.S. Assay*" (see Newman's notes on pages 271–2 in the Ford/"Franklin Hoard" book). Other "bad" items included the James King of William pieces, the J. J. Ott \$100 gold bar, the "engraved" (not stamped) Hentsch and Berton \$7.16 ingot, the G. W. Hall \$20 gold coin, along with the Ted Buttrey-condemned, Justh and Hunter \$80.40 gold ingot, and the 1850 H. M. Naglee & Co. \$100 gold ingot.

Peter Rosa, conveniently located in New York City, had a business called, Becker Manufacturing Company (named after the noted counterfeiter, Wilhelm Becker). Rosa was very adept at making transfer dies of all sorts of numismatic items from ancients to private issues. Painter showed Newman a four page brochure that listed Rosa's copies of fake coins and ingots, including the \$20 Parsons and Co. gold bars (which started the "Franklin Hoard" in 1952). Painter's collection was sold in the 1973 American Numismatic Association sale conducted by Jess Peters.

Ford's unconfirmed stories about an unnamed retired banker that Franklin had met in Phoenix, having saved the U.S.A.O.G. pieces, are nothing more than unconfirmed stories (a.k.a. lies). Of course, that is all that anyone had to go on for 50 years from 1958 to 2008 (when the host coin was announced) were unconfirmed stories, which came from



Figure 22. One of the gold ingots saved by madam Keenan when she survived the sinking of the *S.S. Brother Jonathan*.

Ford. Therefore, we can assume that most of the details surrounding the manufacture and marketing of fake items was done over the phone, rather than in letters. That's why there is virtually nothing in print to either accuse or convict Ford or Franklin.

These 1853 \$20 "Proof" documents, reproduced in the Ford/"Franklin Hoard" book (pages 282–3, 358–361, & 378) prove that neither Franklin or Ford were involved with the manufacture of the fake U.S.A.O.G. "Proof" \$20 gold coins that were acquired and first sold in February 1958.<sup>39</sup>

On another slant, regarding the Clifford Collection sale, here was an item with a fascinating story involving a survivor of the steamship *S.S. Brother Jonathan*, lost off the coast of Crescent City, California, on August 30, 1865, when it hit a hidden rock. Mrs. J. C. Keenan, a popular proprietor of a San Francisco brothel, and seven girls in her employ, were all heading north to seek new customers and opportunities. She took to the San Francisco Mint some raw gold she had received in payment and received ingots in exchange, stamped with the weight, value, and seal of the San Francisco Mint (Fig. 22). Later, the story unraveled. Professor Buttrey pointed out that the facility was known as the Branch Mint at San Francisco in records at the time, not as the San Francisco Mint, the

39. Communication from Moulton to the author, April 15, 2019.

last designation being adopted later, in 1873. On my own I happened to think why the lady of the demimonde had not received gold coins instead of ingots. Gold bars would have been of little use at her destination. To the preceding, John Kleeberg added this:

There's a good article about this by Dan Owens in the *Brasher Bulletin* in the year 2000. It's particularly good because Owens is a fan of John Ford. Owens thought the bars were genuine, and set out to prove that, and ended up concluding that they weren't. He went to the annual reports of the U.S. Mint and discovered that no gold bars had been made in 1865. Owens still believed that Ford acted in good faith: "I believe after numerous phone conversations with him, that he did in fact believe that they were genuine." But then there's this quote from the Gibson sale, auctioned by Stack's in 1974: "Examination of pertinent San Francisco Mint records (Assayer's Register, 1854-65, Register of Bar Warrants Paid, etc.) although incomplete, at the Federal Records Center, GSA, then at 100 Harrison St., San Francisco, by John Ford in early 1971, indicates that these ingots were manufactured in the late Spring of 1865." Since the U.S. Mint in San Francisco did not make *any* ingots in 1865, Ford was blatantly lying about the archival documents and about the so-called *Brother Jonathan* bars.

Eric P. Newman had been right in 1966. Professor Buttrey had been right in the 1999 debate. John Kleeberg had been right in his accusations, and others who questioned Ford had been correct. Ford's defenders had been wrong. Now, his defenders, including me, were sadly disillusioned. The Ford discoveries in the National Numismatic Collection were recognized as fantasies by Curator Dr. Richard Doty and removed from view, but made available for study. The matter went into an even higher gear after Franklin's death in 2000, although his passing had nothing to do with the increased activity.

It seems that Franklin or one or more people making and selling such things to Franklin "reverse-engineered" the information from advertisements and listings found in old-time directories, books, and lists of assayers, copies of which were provided by Ford, or Franklin was allowed to study them while visiting Ford.<sup>40</sup> It was a simple matter to find a citation for an assay office that had been active in California in the 1850s, but for which no gold ingots or coins were known to have survived, to make such a piece, sell it to Franklin, who in turn sold it to Ford, who was delighted with the "new discovery." Fantasy ingots from Nevada, Arizona, and Colorado were sold by Ford as well. Complicating the

40. George F. Kolbe in a communication, April 8, 2019, reported that these Western directories were all intact in the Ford library when he sold it at auction in the early twenty-first century. The sale brought a record \$1,666,000.



Figure 23. Strip of 1855 Blake & Agnell gold before being cut apart into individual bars and stamped with values.

situation is Ford's telling different versions of how certain of the same pieces were discovered.

One of the more obvious mistakes in creating forgeries was the making of so-called Blake & Agnell 1855 \$20 pieces, today generally considered to be complete fabrications (Fig. 23). There was such a firm, but the correct name was Blake & Agrell. Edgar H. Adams, in his book, *Private Gold Coinage of California 1849–1855*, published serially in the *American Journal of Numismatics*, subsequently as a single volume in 1913, misspelled it as Blake & Agnell, and, seemingly, a fraudster copied that information when creating the forgery. I believe I was the first person to call this to Ford's attention before the 1999 debate. His response was that, without any question, they were genuine, and anyone thinking otherwise was simply trying to besmirch his excellent reputation. Agrell/Agnell spelled his name two ways according to Ford, who had a ready answer for every question, and he had researched the matter. End of subject.

John, true to character, always wanted to be right and never proven wrong. Accordingly, he defended the pieces he bought from Franklin, even after an ever-increasing number of his contemporaries pointed out historical or technical flaws in the appearance of the pieces. After Ford's passing in 2005, the matter quieted down, at least for a time.

The magisterial 2013 book by Karl Moulton, *John J. Ford, Jr., and the "Franklin Hoard,"* containing extensive Ford correspondence, invoices, and other ma-

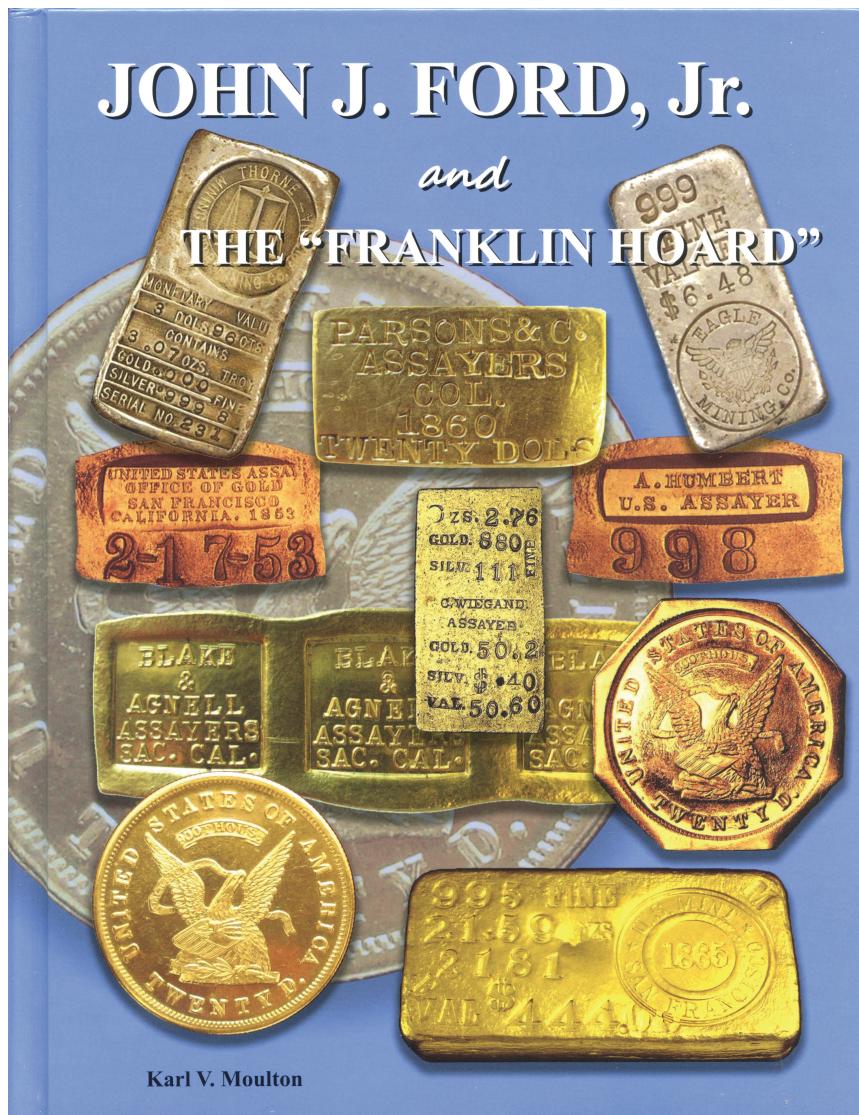


Figure 24. John J. Ford, Jr., and the "Franklin Hoard."



Figure 25. Page 595 in the Moulton book points out that various new discoveries shared the same letter and numeral punches, such as the 7.

terial, revealed that Ford told many lies—saying one thing about the pedigree or origin of a newly-discovered item to one buyer and something different to another buyer (Fig. 24). Doubts of many non-believers were dispelled. After I read and helped copy-edit the manuscript, I felt in a way that I had been told only part of the story by my friend John Ford. I also helped editor Kenneth E. Bressett remove questionable coins from the *Guide Book*. While doing this, Edward Milas, a Chicago dealer who had bought a Bowie \$5 for over \$100,000, threatened to sue Whitman Publishing. The coin was removed, and no such legal action was ever filed.

Many thoughts rushed to my head after reading the Moulton manuscript. I remembered when in 1979 I visited Don Miller at his home in Indiana, Pennsylvania, and for \$100,000 bought his collection of Hard Times tokens—the finest ever formed. Ford contacted me and said he had a customer for it and could sell it intact for me as a favor for our friendship, which he did. Later I learned from my friend and customer Don Partrick that he had been the buyer. We compared notes, and I had the unpleasant necessity to tell him during the transaction about a half dozen tokens had disappeared.

Similarly, I recalled an instance in which Emery May Holden Norweb—I always called her Mrs. Norweb as did everyone else—called to tell me about an incident. Ford had offered her a 1787 Inimica Tyrannis copper coin, stating that he had paid \$5,000 for it, and would she like to buy it for a small advance? She did. Not long afterward in New York City she visited with dealer Lester Merkin. He apologetically said something like this, “Last month I had a New York copper coin that I thought you might want, and was going to save it for you. John Ford came by, I showed it to him, and he insisted I sell it to him. So I did, for \$3,000.”<sup>41</sup>

The John J. Ford, Jr. delineated by Karl Moulton, Theodore Buttrey, John Kleeberg, and others revealed to me a large amount of information of which I was not aware. The extensive Ford correspondence reprinted in the Moulton book contained many surprises (Fig. 25).

In the early 2000's John was hospitalized, suffered from some memory lapses, and could no longer communicate lucidly with his friends. In 2003, his collection was consigned to Stack's, to be expertly cataloged, and for each installment to be a reference work. Michael Hodder took the lead in research and writing descriptions, assisted by staffers, and turned out a series of sales that ultimately realized the precise total of \$63,052,197.38, mainly thanks in retrospect to widows Olga Raymond and Helen Boyd.

41. The amounts are approximate; I do not recall the exact figures.

Then came John's passing in 2005. He was survived by Joan, his wife of 58 years, three daughters, eight grandchildren, one great-grandchild, and his sister, Mary Jane Confort. Joan passed away not long thereafter.

Today, he is remembered mostly as one of the great figures in our hobby, but with the details of his greatness subject to his culpability in the new Western coin and ingot discoveries. Was he aware that the many ex-Franklin discoveries were fakes? Or was he simply trying to defend statements he had made earlier, so as not to be proved wrong?—as several of his friends said at one time, but some of whom are skeptical now, including the present writer. His chicanery, however, is no longer a matter of conjecture.

*The New York Times*, on July 17, 2005, published a lengthy obituary of Ford by Douglas Martin, probably the only professional numismatist up to that time to be accorded such recognition. It included this:

John J. Ford Jr., a coin dealer and collector known for catalogs that brought new clarity to numismatics and whose collections, including the earliest American coins and prized Confederate pennies, have dazzled recent auction-goers, died on July 7 at a nursing home in Scottsdale, Ariz. He was 81....

Francis D. Campbell, the librarian of the American Numismatic Society, said the sales have expanded appreciation of Mr. Ford. "It's going to settle in that he was more important than we thought he was," he said.

It should be noted that *COINage* in 1999 named Ford as one of the "Numismatists of the Century," an honor reflective of the esteem in which he was held by some of his peers (and this was long after some questioned his involvement with certain Western Americana). In *Numismatic News*, May 31, 2005, Russell Rulau reiterated an earlier comment that Ford was "possibly the greatest American numismatic collector of the 20th century." He might have added, "and forger."

To me, John Ford was a great mentor—not in the creation of fantasies, but as a living inspiration of how in-depth numismatic knowledge can be put to good use in the buying, selling, and cataloguing of rare coins, tokens, medals, and paper money. John was also an endlessly fascinating individual, one who inspired love or hate in those who knew him, rarely a happy medium in between. Curiously, he never offered or even discussed with me the details of any of his coin and ingot discoveries. In considering that, I cannot help but wonder why, as I bought so many other things from him. Perhaps he was concerned that I might examine them too closely? Or, as his intended biographer he wanted to be

forthright, or at least try to be. As President Lincoln said, “No man has a good enough memory to be a successful liar” Also, I am not aware that he ever told me a lie when he sold coins and other items to me, but he certainly lied extensively to others, as documented by Karl V. Moulton, John M. Kleeberg, and Professor Theodore Buttrey—this being a short list.

Many of his favorite stories later unraveled. For example, concerning the tale about being on the top of the Munich Town Hall and forcing a captured Nazi soldier to climb a pole and capture the flag elicited this comment from John Kleeberg: “The story about the flag from the top of the Munich Rathaus is totally ridiculous to anyone who has ever seen the Munich Rathaus. It is a very tall building.”<sup>42</sup>

After Ford’s death, John W. Adams, in the Medal Collectors Association’s *MCA Advisory*, took this view, here excerpted:

#### JOHN J. FORD, JR., A BRIEF RETROSPECTIVE

Long in failing health John J. Ford, Jr., died on July 7th. The hobby in general loses a giant and the medal collecting fraternity in particular loses its brightest star. Some members of MCA knew John personally. Most members only knew “of him,” having heard a variety of comments—some good, many bad—about a man who enjoyed controversy as much as he did the vast body of knowledge he accumulated in his library and files.

In his early years, John shared his knowledge, writing brilliant articles for *Wayte Raymond’s Coin Collector’s Journal*, *The Numismatist* and the *Scrapbook*. Then, of course, there was that landmark series of auction catalogues written by Ford and Walter Breen for New Netherlands Coin Company and extending over two decades (Fig. 26). Most aficionados agree that there have been no more authoritative catalogues written before or since. The tragedy is that John published almost nothing in the 35 years thereafter. John’s fatal flaw was that he did value money but found it difficult to value his time....

Ford was embroiled in a controversy that has lasted for forty years regarding western assay ingots. We are convinced that the man never knowingly sold anything that was false but we are equally convinced that many of the ingots in question were indeed false. If it had crossed John’s mind—as it may have—that he, the great John Ford, had been duped by his source, he was too proud to admit it. His detractors have never adduced an iota of evidence that he knowingly sold fake products, much less that he made them. So, yes, the man had his faults but these shrink into relative triviality when compared to his virtues....

42. Communication, April 8, 2019.

JOHN J. FORD, JR. COLLECTION

COINS, MEDALS AND CURRENCY

PART XXIII



NUMISMATIC AMERICAN HISTORY

Tokens of Canada  
Medals of Marquis de Lafayette and Benjamin Franklin  
Civil War Tokens and Sutler Cards  
American Countermarks  
Early American, Hard Times, Merchant and Trade Tokens  
Indian Trader, Military and Territorial Tokens  
Balance Scales

AUGUST 14 & 16, 2013

**Stacks Bowers**  
GALLERIES

The August 2013 Chicago ANA Auction  
Donald E. Stephens Convention Center  
Chicago, Illinois

PUBLIC AUCTION SALE

Figure 26. One of the two dozen Ford Collection sale catalogs.

There is little in the field of numismatic Americana that did not attract his interest. As a collector of numismatic Americana, John had no peer. Stack's sales of his holdings across a variety of specialties stand as a monument to his foresight in gathering material before it was popular as well as his zeal in persevering toward near perfection of each series. Between the collector and his brilliant Bosworth, Michael Hodder, each auction catalogue has become a reference work in itself. Fortunately for we medal collectors the best is yet to come (not that four Washington and Columbia medals, eight clichés of the Diplomatic Medal and a near complete run of War of 1812 in silver have made for a shabby beginning)....

His very success caused envy among rival collectors who had been beaten out by one means or another. Thus, jealousy accounts for much of the ill will that the man accumulated. John out-collected me on many an occasion and my reaction could have been the same as that of many others.

Instead, I chose to ally myself with the "enemy"—to learn rather than to oppose. For his part, John chose to reach out to me, with the result that we enjoyed an increasingly close relationship for 30 years. I, the student, was the recipient of hundreds of hours of tutorials. John, the master, was gratified that his knowledge had found such a receptive field in which to take root.

Whereas Ford wasted time in paying overly much attention to unimportant details, he invested vastly greater amounts of time in answering the questions of others, in reviewing manuscripts and, in general, serving as a database of information for the hobby. Perhaps, this time could have been better spent in writing books but, not really, because no book written by John J. Ford, Jr., the author, could have passed muster with John J. Ford, Jr. the editor. He was the ultimate perfectionist. We medal collectors will remember the man as a pioneer who opened up vast tracts of wilderness that will be developed by those of us who follow in his steps. He will be remembered by other specialists in a similar fashion.

John Adams' comment that to his knowledge, Ford never knowingly sold anything false reflects what a number of his friends, including me, thought after we reflected on his passing. With his showmanship, Ford was a master of ballyhoo and misinformation on many subjects, as Karl Moulton delineates in depth in his book. The onus for creating false coins or having others make them seems to fall directly on Paul Franklin, less directly if at all on Ford. Moulton gives biographical details from Franklin's birth in 1919 onward. Excerpts beginning after his graduation from junior high school, including FBI agent Conroy's emphasis in italic type:

He then attended the Murray Hill High School of Building and Metal Trades, completing a certificate in drafting in 1937. Later, from 1937–1942, he

lived in Manhattan at 126 West 109th Street. In 1939, Franklin worked for the City Planning Commission for the City of New York and later got a job at Western Electric Company, Inc. at 100 Central Ave. in Kearny, New Jersey. Unfortunately, after falling in with the wrong crowd, Franklin was arrested (mainly for guns in his possession), and was reportedly charged “*for possession of counterfeit molds which he used in the manufacture of half-dollars*” in 1941. However, no conviction ever happened. Because of his age, he was given probation.... He violated his parole when he failed to keep in close contact with his probation officer.

When he was discovered by the police, further legal problems arose as he had been evading the draft. Because of this, the F.B.I. searched his apartment at 319 West 74th St; and, according to the *New York Times* article seen in the July 11, 1943, edition, they found about 15 guns, several knives, and 2,000 rounds of ammunition. One interesting gun, according to the arresting agent, was a unique small caliber pistol with a home-made silencer. He faced charges for violating the Federal Firearms Act and Selective Service Act (draft).... Because of the resulting convictions, he spent time in the United States Penitentiary in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. This must have been a most difficult time for Franklin and his wife Dorothy, and was never discussed with any of the children. This chapter in Franklin’s life was only discovered after his passing when the oldest son Paul went through the estate.

The specific nature of the counterfeit molds is unknown today. Giving Ford credit, it is likely that he knew nothing of the above—that Franklin had been arrested for counterfeiting. Or did he, thus recognizing talent that would aid in the making of Western numismatic fantasy pieces? Franklin was active in the Brooklyn Coin Club after his arrest, and thus this seems to have been unknown. Adding mystery to the plot is that when Ford did want to make a deceptive coin in a scenario that came to light through Walter Breen—the Texas doubloon—he called upon Breen to carefully research the lettering and other features.

The above said, in recent correspondence Karl V. Moulton stated emphatically, “As much as we would like to have a scapegoat in the controversy, we can’t blame Franklin for Ford’s lack of honesty!”<sup>43</sup>

Beyond his connection with forgeries, Ford, the expert on American numismatic history, cannot be excused with respect to the fanciful stories he created in his marketing of new discoveries of Western coins and ingots—such as of madam Keenan being one of many examples. For what it is worth, as is but a footnote in his numismatic biography, it seems that he never took advantage of his closer friends and often helped them in many ways.

43. Communication along with manuscript edits and suggestions, April 8, 2019.

My own take, restated, is that I see no evidence that except for the Texas doubloons, from the outset shared with others as a caper, that Ford designed or helped to create fantasy Western coins and bars. However, true to his showmanship DNA he made up or exaggerated stories to market items that Paul Franklin found. He was always very kind and sharing with me.

What is left for posterity, and for certain, is that he was the most complex, controversial, and wily character in the history of American numismatics.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following are among those past and present who helped with the information in this article: John W. Adams, American Numismatic Association, American Numismatic Society, Stanley Apfelbaum, Walter Breen, Julia H. Casey, Vladimir and Elvira Clain-Stefanelli, *Coin World*, Dr. Richard Doty, Michael Hodder, John J. Ford, Jr., Dennis Hengeveld (images used by Moulton), Heritage Auctions, Christine Karstedt, George F. Kolbe, Christopher McDowell, Jennifer Meers, Dan Owens, Jeff Rock, Robert Schuman, Smithsonian Institution, Stack's Bowers Galleries, Ray Williams.

Karl V. Moulton made suggestions and authorized use of information and illustrations from his 2013 book, *John J. Ford, Jr., and the "Franklin Hoard"*, a vast compilation of Ford documents and other information.

John Kleeberg reviewed the manuscript and suggested many additions, amplifications, and edits.

## Lion Dollars: A Collector’s Viewpoint

RAY WILLIAMS (TRENTON, NEW JERSEY)<sup>1</sup>

I was very hungry; and my whole stock of cash consisted of a Dutch dollar, and about a shilling in copper.

—Benjamin Franklin<sup>2</sup>

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LION DOLLAR

In October 1723, 17-year-old Ben Franklin ran away to Philadelphia with only a little pocket change to sustain him. Being that Franklin had a stopover in New York City—New York had a significant number of Lion Dollars in circulation at the time—his “Dutch dollar” could have been what numismatists now refer to as a Lion Dollar.

1. I would like to thank all of JEAN’s editors for their contributions. Writing this article became an educational experience for me. With their awesome inputs, I’ve learned so much. Not listed among the editors is my friend (and curator) Erik Goldstein of Colonial Williamsburg. His input is appreciated here and on anything I write. Also, a thank-you to Jeff Rock for helping with the plates, David Hill for his assistance in the ANS Library, and to Andrew Reinhard, who takes some pictures, a Word document and makes it into the professional work you’re reading.

2. Benjamin Franklin, *The Private Life of the Late Benjamin Franklin*, 1793.

This article gives a general overview of the Lion Dollar, which is unfamiliar to many American collectors, and explains different ways they can be collected and enjoyed. Before getting into the collector's (my) observations about Lion Dollars, a brief review of the coins is in order. The Dutch *Leeuwendaalder* is named for the lion prominently featured on the reverse. The Maryland legislation of 1708 refers to these coins as "Dog Dollars":

...And in Regard there is at Present little other money in this province than the Dollars Commonly Called dog dollars and they being neer such weight and fineness as they would by the forementioned proportion pass at foure shillings and sixpence.<sup>3</sup>

This value of 4s 6d was the legislated value of a Lion Dollar, which was contained in the same document that legislated the value of the Spanish "piece of Eight" to be 6s. Why the derogatory term? One theory is that the crude engraving of the rampant lion looks more like a dog; another theory is that this could be the name given to the coin by Arab traders on the East Coast of Africa. The Lion Dollar was important enough in our colonial economy to be included in the Colonial Issues section of Pre-Federal Coinage chapter of the *Red Book*,<sup>4</sup> starting with the 2017 edition. Although the 2019 edition of the *Red Book*<sup>5</sup> gives the date range for these coins as between 1601 and 1693, Holland actually started minting them in 1575. The last coin was struck in West Friesland in 1713. The Lion Half Dollar, having the same designs and metal purity as its larger brother (just half the weight), was struck between 1577 and 1668.<sup>6</sup>

Circulating alongside Lion Dollars were crown-sized Dutch Rix Dollars and Ducatoons (Plate V). The Lion Dollar contained 0.750 silver as opposed to the Rix Dollar's 0.885 silver and the Ducatoon's 0.920 silver content.<sup>7</sup> These coins circulated at an approximate value of 40, 50, and 60 stuivers respectively.<sup>8</sup> The different intrinsic value of these three coins seems to correspond with three Dutch international trading regions.<sup>9</sup>

The Lion Dollar obverse has a knight looking over his shoulder supporting a shield with one hand. The shield generally, but not always, has a rampant lion.

3. Archives of Maryland, Vol. 27, pp. 297–98.

4. A *Guidebook of United States Coins* 2017, Whitman Publishing LLC, 2016, p. 36.

5. A *Guidebook of United States Coins* 2019, Whitman Publishing LLC, 2018, p. 46.

6. A. Delmonte, *The Silver Benelux*, Jacques Schulman N. V., Amsterdam, 1967, pp. 193–208.

7. <https://coins.nd.edu/ColCoin/index.html>

8. Values fluctuated slightly over the decades due to national and international finances.

9. Private communication with John Kleeberg.

The legends can vary but a typical obverse example would be: "MO·ARG·PRO·CON - FOE·BELG·HOL." This roughly translates to "Silver money of the Province of the Netherlands Confederation Holland." The mint location is usually—but not always—at the end of the legend. The reverse has a central design of a rampant lion surrounded by the legend "CONFIDENS·DNO·NON·MOVETVR" ("Who trusts in the Lord is not moved"). Keep in mind that when this coinage was first produced the Dutch War of Independence from Spain was well underway, and the legend was brought about in a time of strife and struggle. This is similar to the motto "In God We Trust" on the design of the American two-cent coin during the Civil War. Societies do seem to seek divine assistance/recognition in time of struggle and not so much in times of peace and prosperity.

According to Delmonte, Lion Dollars were struck at 12 different mint locations under the authority of provinces and large cities.<sup>10</sup> These mints are: Campen, Deventer, Friesland, Gelderland, Holland, Nijmegen, Overijssel, Utrecht, West Friesland, Zeeland, Zutphen, and Zwolle (see Plates I-IV for common examples of each mint). Curiously Delmonte's book lists two additional Lion Dollars but did not include them in the *Leeuwendaalder* section: Delmonte 403 (minted in Kamerijk) and Delmonte 559 (minted in Batenburg). This omission might be explained by the fact that Delmonte lists the Lion Dollars mints in the Dutch United Provinces section, but Kamerijk and Batenburg were under the Holy Roman Emperor.<sup>11</sup>

Publications on Lion Dollars in American numismatic literature are rare, but worth discovering, the most important of which being John Kleeberg's "The Circulation of Leeuwendaalders in England's North American Colonies" (CNL 152). Kleeberg analyzes the trade routes that brought these coins to the eastern seaboard.<sup>12</sup> He observes that the coins were not common in colonial British American circulation until 1693 when trade routes from the Indian Ocean brought the coins here in quantity. Kleeberg goes on to explain which Colonies saw them, how they were valued in commerce by contemporary legislation, and where they have been found in recent recoveries. The Lion Dollar was so important in New York City that in 1709 legislation was passed to print paper money denominated in 4, 8, 16, and 20 "Lyon Dollars" (Plate VI). The wreck of the British ship HMS *Fever-sham*, which went down in 1711 off the coast of Nova Scotia, yielded significant numbers of Lion Dollars among the many other coins salvaged.<sup>13</sup> The coins from

10. Delmonte, *The Silver Benelux*, pp. 193–208.

11. John Kleeberg, pers. comm.

12. John Kleeberg, "The Circulation of Leeuwendaalders in England's North American Colonies," *The Colonial Newsletter*, Vol. 53, No. 2, American Numismatic Society, 2013, pp. 1693–1733.

13. See John Kleeberg, "The Circulation of Leeuwendaalders (Lion Dollars) in England's North American Colonies 1693–1733," *The Colonial Newsletter*, Vol. 152, August 2013, p. 4034; Erik Goldstein and Joseph Lasser, "Dutch Treat—New York before the British," *The Numismatist*, October 2009, p. 43.

this wreck are important because those excavated show a snapshot in time of what could be found circulating in New York City.

Lou Jordan wrote a comprehensive article about Maryland's early coinage and economics, "Lord Baltimore Coinage" (CNL 126), which devotes a considerable amount of text to the Lion Dollar and its importance to Maryland's early commerce.<sup>14</sup>

Erik Goldstein and Joe Lasser have written two important articles about Dutch coinage and Lion Dollars. "Lying Lions and Deceptive Dogs" discusses counterfeit and imitation Lion Dollars.<sup>15</sup> According to Goldstein and Lasser, counterfeits would contain either no or too-little silver—a coin meant to deceive and cheat. Imitations, however, were struck in Italy, Germany, and other places, using proper silver content. These imitations were made to facilitate commerce by copying a coinage that was well-known and readily accepted—the ultimate compliment (although the modern US Mint might not find such a compliment acceptable). These imitations supplemented the quantity of Lion Dollars already in circulation, for which there was a need. The other important article by Goldstein and Lasser is "Dutch Treat—New York before the British", which explains New Netherland commerce.<sup>16</sup>

In 1993, the American Numismatic Society published *Money of the American Colonies and Confederation* (Numismatic Studies 20), by Philip Mossman—what we in the hobby call "The Money Book." Mossman expertly provides an overview of the Dutch coinage in the Colonies, making it an important reference for many coinages associated with pre-Federal numismatics.<sup>17</sup>

The final publication fundamental to the understanding of Lion Dollars is *The Island at the Center of the World*, by Russell Shorto.<sup>18</sup> Shorto combines accessible prose with well-researched history, updating more traditional, American views of Native Americans, the Dutch in New Amsterdam, and early American history, one particularly keen observation being that the Dutch did not "purchase" Manhattan from the Native Americans. From the viewpoint of the Lenape Indians, the gift of 60 guilders' worth of goods was to seal a cohabitation agreement where both would come to the defense of the other if attacked.

### COLLECTING THE LION DOLLAR

From a collector's perspective, I became fascinated with the *Leeuwendaalder* for several reasons. It did circulate in the British American Colonies, a time period of

14. Jordan, "Lord Baltimore Coinage," pp. 2651–68.

15. Erik Goldstein and Joe Lasser, "Lying Lions & Deceptive Dogs," *The Numismatist*, American Numismatic Association, August 2005, pp. 40–44.

16. Erik Goldstein and Joe Lasser, "Dutch Treat – New York Before the British," *The Numismatist*, American Numismatic Association, October, 2009, pp. 36–43.

17. Philip Mossman, *Money of the American Colonies and Confederation*, Numismatic Studies No. 20, American Numismatic Society, 1993.

18. Russell Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World*, Doubleday, 2004.

interest to me. The coin's size is impressive. Its crudeness, being struck from hand-made dies on hand-prepared planchets, is endearing. For a collector on a budget, they are very economical to obtain compared to other *Red Book* colonials.

The date on the coins can be either on the obverse or the reverse, in the legend or in the field, and on rare occasions there is no date at all. My favorite date for this coin is 1652, as it is for any foreign silver coin that circulated in our colonies.<sup>19</sup> It would take some time and dedication, but forming a date collection would be both rewarding and impressive—something I might tackle in retirement.

Learning of my personal interest in collecting, Erik Goldstein, Senior Curator of Mechanical Arts and Numismatics at Colonial Williamsburg, informed me that I would need to obtain 30 Lion Dollars to have enough contemporary money to purchase the items traded to the Lenape in the previously mentioned agreement. I was off and running. I first purchased *The Silver Benelux* book thinking it would be fun to actually collect 30 of the dollars, and in the process obtain at least one example from each of the 12 issuing authorities. After a little research, I found that the Lion Dollars from Zutphen were as scarce as "Date Under Plowbeam" New Jersey Coppers, and those of Nijmegen do appear on rare occasion but are out of my price-range. The goal was now to obtain an example from each of the 10 more common mint sites in pursuit of the 30 dollars.

I attended coin shows, participated in auctions, and made eBay purchases. During the journey, I received one beautiful gift coin from a friend which helped to complete my goal. It took several years, but between Lion Dollars and Half-Dollars, I obtained 30 dollars in face value. In the process, I also obtained two counterfeit dollars, a Rix Dollar, and a Ducatoon as type coins (Plate V).

Based on my experience, the coins are equally available across the board from the 10 affordable mints. Using *The Silver Benelux* as a guide, I found that it was fairly easy to attribute the coins by comparing the legends, but there are a few variants that are unlisted. This provides an opportunity for someone to do some in-depth research and write a modern standard reference for American collectors. It is my experience that the Lion Half-Dollars appear for sale maybe once for every 20 of the dollar coins, but the price does not reflect the relative scarcity—not yet anyway. A type set of the major design variations would be another fun collecting pursuit. There are several design variations from the norm that I find quite interesting, two of which I describe below.

Zeeland struck Lion Dollars in 1589, 1597–1599, 1618, and 1680, the latter two being extreme rarities. The 1589 issue varies from the norm by placing a lion swimming in water on the obverse shield—a device already used in Zeeland's arms for more than 100 years. The coins of 1597–1599 go through two more major changes. The most noticeable is that the rampant lion on the reverse is now swim-

19. The 1652 date is on most of the MA silver, and as such I find it fun to obtain coins of this date that could have circulated in our Colonies.

ming in water. You will also see that the reverse legend no longer reads "Who trusts in the Lord is not moved" but has changed to "Domine Serva Nos Perimvs." This translates to "Lord save us, we perish." A theory for this reverse device and legend is that Zeeland was experiencing severe flooding at the time (some say of biblical proportions) and this reverse was designed to reflect it. These are not as common as the standard design, but do show up occasionally (Plate IV, coin 10).

Another design variation is on one of my favorite dollars from Zwolle. On this particular coin, the contrast between the fields and the devices is very attractive. When I bought the coin, I noticed there was a difference from the norm. Instead of having a lion in the shield, there are two characters, which reminded me of St. George slaying the dragon (Plate IV, coin 12). This was not a British coin, however. Did Zwolle have a St. George too? After making an inquiry to the reputable source of the coin from Dusseldorf, they informed me that Zwolle has a St. Michael and that the event portrayed on the shield is St. Michael slaying a basilisk. The basilisk is a fictional character not unlike the dragon, a reptile so terrible that it kills with a single glance. Another colleague suggested that St. Michael is actually slaying a demon, not a basilisk, based on the figure's shape.

Although none of my Lion Dollars are certified, I have seen the labels on the plastic holders reference "Del" numbers and/or "Dav" numbers. The "Del" number refers to the die types attributed by Delmonte's *The Silver Benelux*. The "Dav" number refers to the die type as listed in John Davenport's *European Crowns*. Davenport books are organized by century, and all three books would be necessary to cover the entire date range, whereas Delmonte covers the full range in one volume. I borrowed the second Davenport book from the ANA Library to write this article and found that the books by both authors are useful references. Davenport shows an image of each type with the description while Delmonte uses plates located in the rear of his book. Not all the types of Lion Dollars are listed in either book. For each of these types, there could be dozens (or many dozens) of die varieties. It has become clear to me that the Lion Dollars are wholly deserving of their own monograph.

The Lion Dollars offer so many areas that are ripe for research and discoveries. These are fun coins to collect, and you don't need to be a millionaire to be able to do so. They are large, hand-struck, impressive, readily available, and an important part of our colonial history. So popular is the design that the Royal Dutch Mint is striking bullion replica coins today. An appendix follows showing the major types of Lion Dollars.

## PLATE I



Coin #1 Campen

Obverse: MO.ARG.CIVILIM. P.BEL.CAMPEN

Reverse: 1652 CONFIDENS.DNO.NON.MOVETVR

42.1mm (N-S) 421.3grains

Delmonte 862

Davenport 4879



Coin #2 Deventer

Obverse: MO.ARG.CIVIT. IMPER.DAVENT

Reverse: 1664 .CONFIDENS.DNO.NON.MOVETVR

41.7mm (N-S) 427.2grains

Delmonte 858

Davenport 4875



Coin #3 Friesland

Obverse: MO.ARG.PRO.C. ONFOE.BEIG.FRI

Reverse: 1607 .CONFIDENS.DNO.NON.MOVETVR

40.0mm (N-S) 425.0grains

Delmonte 852

Davenport 4853

Photos courtesy of De Nederlandsche Bank, National Numismatic Collection, Amsterdam.

## PLATE II



Coin #4 Gelderland  
 Obverse: MO.ARG.PRO.CO NEBEL GEL.  
 Reverse: 1607 .CONFIDENS.DNO.NON.MOVETVR.  
 41.3mm (N-S) 422.2grains  
 Delmonte 825  
 Davenport 4849



Coin #5 Holland  
 Obverse: xMOxNOxARGx xORDINx HOLx  
 Reverse: xCONFIDENSxDNOxNONxMOVETVR.  
 1589 flanking obverse shield in the legend  
 39.3mm (N-S) 428.1grains  
 Delmonte 831  
 Davenport 8838



Coin #6 Nijmegen  
 Obverse: MO.ARG.CIV.IMP BELG.NOVIO MAG  
 Reverse: 1692 CONFIDENS.DNO.NON.MOVETVR.  
 Diameter UNK. 421.3 grains  
 Delmonte 827  
 Davenport 4887

## PLATE III



Coin #7 Overijssel

Obverse: xMO+NO+ORD+TRS ISLxVALOR+ HOL

Reverse: xCONFIDENSxDNOxNONxMOVETVRx.

1591 flanking obverse shield in the legend

40.8mm (N-S) 410.8grains

Delmonte 855

Davenport 8846



Coin #8 Utrecht

Obverse: MO.ARG.PRO.CO -NFOE.BELGTRA

Reverse: 1646.CONFIDENS.DNO.NON.MOVETVR.

42.6mm (N-S) 418.5grains

Delmonte 844

Davenport 4863



Coin #9 West Friesland

Obverse: MO+NO+ORD+WEST FRI+VALOR+HOL

Reverse: DEVS+FORTITVDO+ET+SPES+NOSTRA

40.1mm (N-S) 426.3grains

1604 date in obverse field

Delmonte 835

Davenport 4868

## PLATE IV



Coin #10 Zeeland

Obverse: xMOxNOxARGx xORDINx ZELx  
 Reverse: xDOMINExSERVAXNOSxPERIMVSx

40.8mm (N-S) 421.4 grains

1598 flanking reverse shield in the legend

Swimming Lion

Delmonte 838

Davenport 8870



Coin #11. Zutphen

Obverse: MOARG.CIV.IMP BEL.ZVTPHANIE  
 Reverse: 1692.CONFIDENS.DNO.NON.MOVETVR.

Diameter UNK 414.8 grains

Delmonte 828

Davenport 4888



Coin #12 Zwolle

Obverse: MO:ARG:CIVITA ZWOL:AL:IMP  
 Reverse: DA:PACEM:DOMINE:IN: DIEBV:S:NOST

39.8mm (N-S) 419.8 grains

1641 date in reverse field

St Michael slaying the Basilisk in shield

Delmonte 866

Davenport 4883

## PLATE V



Coin #13 Utrecht Rix Dollar

Obverse: MO.ARG.PRO.CONFO.BELG.TRAIEC (note - F punched over O)

Reverse: CONCORDIA.RES.PARVÆ.CRESCVNT

41.5 mm (N-S) Weight N/A

1623 date in reverse field

Delmonte 942

Davenport 4836



Coin #14 Antwerp Ducatoon

Obverse: 1649.PHIL.III.D.G.HISP.ET.INDIAR.REX.

Reverse: ARCHID.AVST.DVX.BVRG.BRAB.

44.1mm (N-S) 514.4 grains

Delmonte 284

Davenport 4454



Coin #15 Imitating Deventer Type (see Coin #2)

Contemporary Counterfeit Lion Dollar

Obverse: MO.ARG.CIVIT.IMP.DAVENT

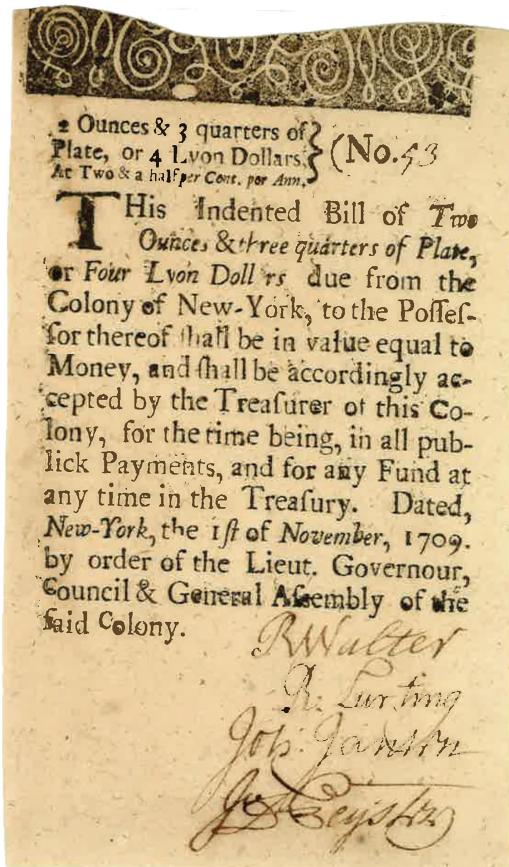
Reverse: 1666.CONFIDENS.DNO.NON.MOVETVR.

43.9mm (N-S) 388.4 grains

Delmonte 858

Davenport 4875

## PLATE VI



November 1, 1709, New York 4 Lyon Dollar issue, having the spelling Governor instead of Governor. This indentured uniface bill was printed by William Bradford and hand signed by Robert Walter, Robert Lurting, Johannes Jansen & Johannes DePeyster.

## The Massachusetts Pine Tree Penny: A Copper Token Struck in 1776

JULIA H. CASEY (BALLSTON SPA, NEW YORK)

The 1776 dated Pine Tree copper of Massachusetts has been a numismatic mystery since it was first discovered in the mid-nineteenth century. Study of the Pine Tree copper (Fig. 1) along with the design-linked “Indian” and “Janus” coppers (Figs. 2 and 3) has suffered from a lack of contemporary documentation of production. In recent years, there have been unpublished rumors and skepticism concerning the origins of these coins.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this paper is to introduce a contemporary newspaper account supporting the existence of the Pine Tree copper in 1776. Furthermore, there will be a discussion and investigation of the early provenance of the 1776 Pine Tree copper in order to restore it to its rightful place as a quintessential American Colonial-era coin.

In this analysis, the focus will be on the 1776 Pine Tree copper coin. This coin, however, cannot be properly examined without also looking at the Janus

1. The source of some of the skepticism stems from the reports of a few individuals who have viewed the Pine Tree copper and determined it to be “impossible” for the coin to have been struck in 1776. The author personally examined the Pine Tree copper at the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston on March 18, 2019, and found nothing problematic in the fabric or design of this impressive coin that would support speculation that it was not struck in 1776.



Figure 1. "Pine Tree copper" Massachusetts Pine Tree penny. Courtesy of the Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society.



Figure 2. "Indian copper" Courtesy of the American Numismatic Society. ANS 1917.136.2.



Figure 3. "Janus copper" Courtesy of Heritage Auctions.

and the Indian coppers as the origin of all three coins is most likely the same Boston workshop in the summer of 1776.

The three coins of the Massachusetts copper series of 1776, each presently unique, have been linked by associated reverse designs of a "Goddess of Liberty" figure. The coins also share a similar appearance in die preparation, placement of design and legends, as well as apparent minting standards. Several scholars in the past have agreed that these coins were produced at the same minting establishment.<sup>2</sup>

The Indian copper (Fig. 2) was first reported by Howland Wood of Brookline, Massachusetts in the early twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> It shows signs of circulation,

2. See Sylvester Sage Crosby, *The Early Coins of America*, (Boston: Estes & Lauriat, 1875), pp. 304–5. See also, Walter Breen, *Complete Encyclopedia of U.S. and Colonial Coins* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), p. 59.

3. H. Wood, "An Unpublished Colonial," *The Numismatist*, June 1911, p. 228.

We hear the Indians are exceeding fond of our copper money, which they string round their necks as the Indians do coarse shells on the coast of Africa, which has occasioned commissions for large quantities to be shipped for New-York and Halifax.

Figure 4. *Boston Evening-Post*, June 4, 1764.

although what appears outwardly to be wear to the legends and features may in fact be the result of an incomplete strike. It is also holed for reasons unknown. Occasionally coins were holed for ornamental use. In the eighteenth century there are reports of Native Americans engaging in this practice (Fig. 4):

However, the placement of the hole on this coin is not in the 12-o'-clock position as would be expected for a pendant. It is also possible that it was holed to "mark" it as a counterfeit and unsuitable for circulation because it was an unrecognized design. This type of piercing is sometimes seen on contemporary counterfeit halfpennies of George II and George III.<sup>4</sup> This is noteworthy because the Indian copper is overstruck on a (reportedly counterfeit) 1747 George II Irish halfpenny. It is 27 mm in diameter, weighs 117.5 grains, and currently resides in the American Numismatic Society's collection in New York City.

The Indian copper also differs in the obverse and reverse legends when compared to the other two pieces. The obverse legend appears to read "PROVINCE" of Massachusetts, while the Pine Tree and the Janus legends use the word "STATE." This has led to speculation that the Indian copper was produced prior to the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, while the Pine Tree and the Janus pieces were produced sometime after that date. The reverse legend is incomplete and apparently written in Latin. It may read "DEFENSOR LIBERTATIS."<sup>5</sup> Another possibility could be "DEA LIBERTATIS" for the Goddess of Liberty. The Indian copper is the only one of the three to have the reverse legend written in Latin.

The Janus copper (Fig. 3) is 23 mm, 81.2 grains, and was first documented in the collection of Matthew A. Stickney of Salem, Massachusetts in May 1854.<sup>6</sup> It also shows signs of circulation and, like the Indian copper, apparently circu-

4. This statement is premised upon the author's experience.

5. Wood, p. 228. "All that is visible is D at the beginning and ATIS at the end, probably for DEFENSOR LIBERTATIS."

6. David Stone, "19th Century Fantasy Piece? Celebrated 1776 Janus Copper Rarity Continues Mystifying Numismatists," *Intelligent Collector*, Heritage Auctions, Spring/Summer 2018, p. 80. Letter of Charles Ira Bushnell to Matthew Stickney.

P H I L A D E L P H I A.  
*In Massa. Provincial Congress, Watertown, April 30, 1775.*  
 WHEREAS an agreement has been made between General Gage and the Inhabitants of the town of Boston, for the removal of the persons and effects of such of the inhabitants of the town of Boston, as may be so disposed, excepting their fire-arms and ammunition, into the country:—

Figure 5. *Pennsylvania Journal*, May 17, 1775.

lated in commerce. It is also possible that the Janus copper was held as a “pocket piece” and the wear to the features is a direct result of this circumstance. The reverse legend of the Janus copper is “GODDESS LIBERTY.” The Janus copper was sold by Heritage Auctions as part of the the Donald Groves Partrick Collection.<sup>7</sup>

The Pine Tree copper (Fig. 1) is the largest of the three at 31.8 mm and 198 grains in nearly pristine condition. It does not appear to have circulated or even been buried. The reverse legend of the Pine Tree copper reads “LIBERTY AND VIRTUE.” This coin did not travel far from its place of origin and was discovered by a Boston grocer during a building renovation some years prior to 1852. This coin is presently in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston, having been acquired from the estate of William Sumner Appleton in 1905.

The obverse legend on the Pine Tree copper reads “MASSACHUSETTS STATE.” While the obverse legends of both the Indian and the Janus Coppers use the abbreviation “MASSA” for Massachusetts. The use of “MASSA” has been critiqued by some as an anachronism not used in the 1770s.<sup>8</sup> However, there is irrefutable evidence that “MASSA” was used as an abbreviation for “MASSACHUSETTS” during the Revolutionary period, as can be seen in the *Pennsylvania Journal*, May 17, 1775 (Fig. 5):

In Massa. Provincial Congress, Watertown, April 30, 1775. WHEREAS an agreement has been made between General Gage and the Inhabitants of the town of Boston, for the removal of the persons and effects of such of the inhabitants of the town of Boston, as may be so disposed, excepting their fire-arms and ammunition, into the country:—

Another example of the use of the “Massa” abbreviation is within George Washington’s letter to the New York Committee of Safety, February 8, 1777:

7. Heritage Auctions, January, 2015, lot 5672, “1776” H1C Massachusetts Janus Copper. The selling price was \$44,650.

8. Ibid. See also Stone, p. 80.

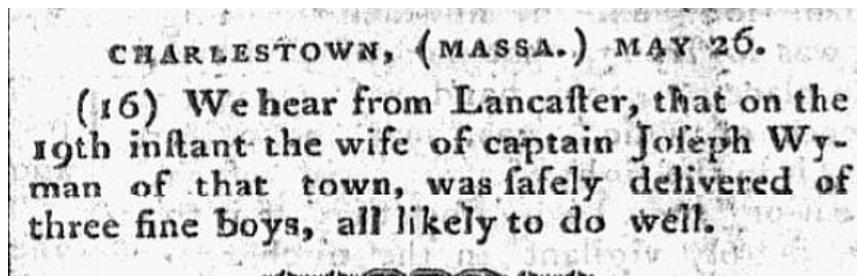


Figure 6. *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, July 7, 1786.

I am not without my Apprehensions for the Safety of the Fortress of Ti-  
conderoga and have therefore wrote to New Hampshire and Massa. Bay,  
to forward their new Troops to that Place with all possible dispatch.<sup>9</sup>

There is also this example from 1786 (Fig. 6), which is included because of the clear print type and interesting subject matter:

Heretofore the use of "MASSA" in the legends of these pieces should be considered as consistent with a 1770s production as the above newspaper ac-  
counts clearly show that "MASSA" was an abbreviation in use during and after  
the Revolutionary War.

It is surmised here that the Indian copper was struck at a primitive minting operation in the North End of Boston during June or July, 1776, and the Janus and the Pine Tree coppers were minted at the same location sometime between July and September 1776. Now let us travel back to 1776 and examine a com-  
munique that is the focus of this paper from a passenger who sailed on the ship *William* and who arrived in England from Boston in November 1776.

#### THE CONTEMPORARY NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT

In late 1776, the below newspaper article was reproduced in slightly different for-  
mats in a number of British newspapers (Fig. 7):<sup>10</sup>

9. *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799*. Prepared under the direction of the United States George Washington Bicentennial Com-  
mission and published by authority of Congress John C. Fitzpatrick, Ed., Vol. 7, Jan. 13,  
1777-April 30, 1777 (1932). Online Version. [libertyparkusafd.org/washington/electronic%20books/Volume%207.htm](http://libertyparkusafd.org/washington/electronic%20books/Volume%207.htm).

10. See also *The Stamford Mercury* Nov. 28, 1776, *The Chester Chronicle*, Nov. 29, 1776,  
*The Leeds Intelligencer and Yorkshire General Advertiser*, Dec. 3, 1776.

A Gentleman who came home in the William, Captain Moore, from Boston, says, that the people of America, being in want of change since the coining of the paper currency, used frequently to divide the dollar notes into halves, and again into quarters and eighths, to answer the purposes of smaller payments, which having been productive of frauds and inconveniences, the Congress, to remedy the same, have coined a great quantity of copper tokens in every province, which bear the arms of the colony where they are struck, and are to pass for half dollars, quarters, eighths, and sixteenths, agreeable to the stamps upon them, a quantity of copper having been imported at Philadelphia, in a Dutch ship for that purpose, which has been distributed to the other provinces, eighteen hundred weight having been sent to Boston, where they had already begun to stamp the several pieces approved of by the Congress, but they were miserably executed; their size corresponds with the piece in silver which they are intended to pass for. Before they got the copper they had it in idea to have made them of pewter, but on consideration, they remembered it would encourage the trade of the mother country, and it was therefore on that account set aside.

Figure 7. *Caledonian Mercury*, November 27, 1776.

A gentleman who came home in the William, Capt. Moore, from Boston, says, that the people of America, being in want of change since the coining of the paper currency, used frequently to divide the dollar notes into halves, and again in quarters and eighths, to answer the purposes of smaller payments, which having been productive of frauds and inconveniences, the Congress, to remedy the same, have coined a great quantity of copper tokens in every province, which bear the arms of the colony where they are struck, and are to pass for half dollars, quarters, eighths and sixteenths, agreeable to the stamps upon them, a quantity of copper having been imported at Philadelphia in a Dutch ship for that purpose, which has been distributed to the other provinces, eighteen hundred weight having been sent to Boston, where they had already begun to stamp the several pieces allowed and approved of by the Congress, but they were miserably executed; their size corresponds with the piece in silver which they are intended to pass for. Before they got the copper they had it in idea to have made them of pewter, but on consideration, they remembered it would encourage the trade of the mother country, and it was therefore on that account set aside.

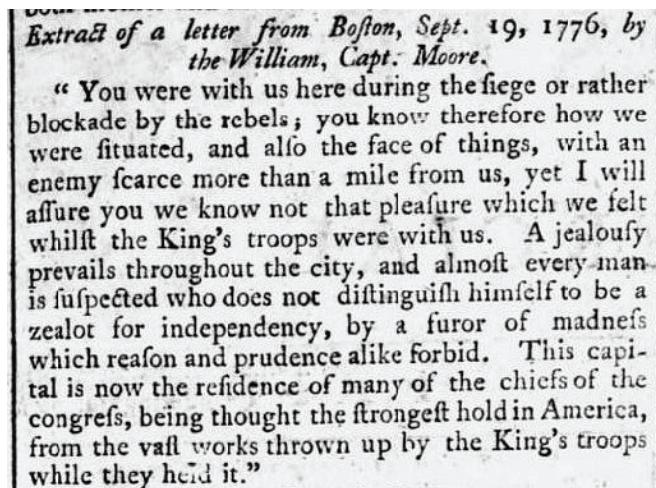


Figure 8. *Chester Chronicle*, November 15, 1776.

The *William* and her passengers under the command of Captain Moore left Boston in late September, 1776. We know this because the above information was not the only news passed along to British newspapers after the *William*’s passengers disembarked at The Downs<sup>11</sup> at the end of their voyage. The November 15, 1776, *Chester Chronicle*<sup>12</sup> (Fig. 8) contained the following:

Extract of a letter from Boston, Sept. 19, 1776,  
by the William, Capt. Moore.

“ You were with us here during the siege or rather blockade by the rebels; you know therefore how we were situated, and also the face of things, with an enemy scarce more than a mile from us, yet I will assure you we know not that pleasure which we felt whilst the King’s troops were with us. A jealousy prevails throughout the city, and almost every man is suspected who does not distinguish himself to be a zealot for independency, by a furor of madness which reason and prudence alike forbid. This capital is now the residence of many of the chiefs of the congress, being thought the strongest hold in America, from the vast works thrown up by the King’s troops while they held it.”

11. The Downs is a ship anchorage at an area of sheltered, favorable sea in the southern North Sea near the English Channel off the coast of Kent.

12. Chester is a walled city in Cheshire, England, on the River Dee, close to the border with Wales.

**The William, Moore, from Boston, which is arrived in the Downs, had been taken by the Provincials, and was afterwards purchased by the passengers, that they might proceed to England.**

Figure 9. *Stamford Mercury*, November 7, 1776.

This interesting letter excerpt from a Loyalist who remained in Boston after the siege<sup>13</sup> establishes that the *William* sailed from Boston on or after September 19, 1776.<sup>14</sup>

There is also the following excerpt reported in the *Stamford Mercury* on November 7, 1776 (Fig. 9):

The William, Moore, from Boston, which is arrived in the Downs, had been taken by the Provincials, and was afterwards purchased by the passengers, that they might proceed to England.

This is additional information about the *William* that reminds us that she and her passengers undertook a perilous wartime voyage between ports of the two enemy combatants. It also establishes that the *William* likely arrived in England during the first week of November 1776.

The *Naval Documents of The American Revolution* provide confirmation that the *William* left Boston around September 26, 1776.<sup>15</sup> The “*List of Persons Permitted to Sail in the Ship William for England*” is a mix of single men, families,

13. The Siege of Boston lasted from April 19, 1775–March 17, 1776, during which time the American forces controlled land access to the city while the British forces could still reach the harbor and wharfs via the sea. Many Loyalists left the city with the British soldiers and fleet on March 17, 1776. However, some remained and ships continued to transport Loyalists to England, New York City, and Nova Scotia during the summer of 1776. To this day, March 17th is celebrated as “Evacuation Day” in the Boston area.

14. The letter also makes reference to Boston being “now the residence of many of the chiefs of the congress” in the summer of 1776. This curious statement may help explain the references to “Congress” in the description of the “copper tokens” by the passenger on the *William*. The passenger’s information may have come from the “chiefs of the congress” he knew while in Boston. These “chiefs of congress” were more likely to be Massachusetts and local colonial governmental officials. What the passenger assumed was a coinage to apply to “every province” in reality may have been a “copper token” production limited to Massachusetts.

15. *Naval Documents of The American Revolution*, Vol. 6, Part 5 of 8, 1972, Electronically published by American Naval Records Society Bolton Landing, New York 2012, pp. 998–1000.

servants and slaves as well as the captains and crew members of other vessels. Many of the passengers on the *William* had been stranded in Boston after their previous ships had been taken as “prizes”<sup>16</sup> by the Americans while en route from the British Caribbean colonies. The *William* and Captain Benjamin Moore (Moor) sailed under the ownership of William Ross. The members of the Ross family who are listed as passengers on the *William* include: William Ross, his wife, three children, and three servants. The Ross family were passengers of the *Zachariah Bayley* when it was headed from Jamaica to London “with a cargo of sugar, rum, cotton, wool, fustic and pimento.”<sup>17</sup> On June 22, 1776, the *Zachariah Bayley* was taken by the sloop *Yankee* under the command of Henry Johnson out of Watertown, Massachusetts. On June 26, 1776, the *Yankee* also captured the British Army transport ship *Creighton* that was sailing from Antigua to New York with a cargo of rum for the British Army.<sup>18</sup> The *Zachariah Bayley* and the *Creighton* were then sent to Massachusetts and arrived at Cape Ann on July 7, 1776. In short course, the passengers and crew of the *Zachariah Bayley* and the *Creighton* petitioned to be allowed to leave for England.<sup>19</sup> On August 7, 1776, a petition was granted and the *Creighton* was purchased by William Ross on August 16, 1776. The *Creighton* was renamed the *William* when it set sail from Boston to England on about September 26, 1776.

Of the approximately 82 passengers who set sail on the *William*, only an estimated 15 seemingly have the potential to be the “gentleman” who reported the existence of the “copper tokens.” The remainder can be identified as captains and ship hands from other vessels, servants, women, or children.<sup>20</sup> Of this group only four can be traced to having been residents of Boston or the surrounding area; however, the origins of six individuals on the list have not been identified. For summaries of the particulars of a few of the passengers permitted to sail on the ship *William* see the Appendix attached to this paper.<sup>21</sup>

16. “Prize Law. During times of war, belligerent states may attempt to interfere with maritime commerce to prevent ships from carrying goods that will aid the war effort of an opponent. After ships are captured and brought to a friendly port, a local tribunal called a prize court will determine the legality of the seizure, or the destruction of the vessel and cargo if the vessel cannot be sailed to a friendly port.” *West’s Encyclopedia of American Law*, 2nd Ed., 2008.

17. American War of Independence at Sea, Massachusetts Privateer Sloop *Yankee*. [www.awiatsea.com/Privateers/Y/Yankee](http://www.awiatsea.com/Privateers/Y/Yankee).

18. American War of Independence at Sea, American Prizes June 1776. [www.awiatsea.com/pl/Am/American](http://www.awiatsea.com/pl/Am/American)

19. Ibid.

20. Two newspaper accounts that provide incomplete lists of the names of the passengers on the *William* aid in this identification. See *The Caledonian Mercury*, November 9, 1776, and November 13, 1776.

21. Included in the Appendix is also the PETITION OF A STEERAGE PASSENGER IN

The details provided by the gentleman passenger on the *William* in the report are important to numismatics for a number of reasons. Other newspaper accounts of American coinage production from the year 1776 have been used by numismatic researchers to bolster or refute the narrative of the production of the “Continental dollar” coins of that date.<sup>22</sup> These accounts are frustratingly short on specific detail that would aid in identifying the coins or the time and place of striking. Further reference will be made later in this paper to these examples of contemporary evidence. The account above is a contrast as it incorporates distinct detail to help determine the subject coinage.

We know that the *William* left Boston on or about September 26, 1776, and that a passenger on the *William* had knowledge of “copper tokens” minted at Boston “where they had already begun to stamp the several pieces allowed.” These copper tokens are described as having multiple denominations “agreeable to the stamps upon them,” i.e., unlike a British halfpenny or farthing of this time period, these copper tokens were marked with specific denominations. Of utmost relevance is the statement that these copper tokens “bear the arms of the colony where they are struck.” Equally compelling is that these copper tokens were “miserably executed.”

#### AGREEABLE TO THE STAMPS UPON THEM

Given this description of the “copper tokens” we should now assess the Pine Tree copper and compare it to the information presented in the 1776 newspaper account. The Pine Tree copper is stamped on the obverse with “1 d L.M.” This has historically been interpreted as a mark of denomination. It may signify “1 Penny Lawful Money” as the letter D or d is widely known as the symbol for “penny” in the English monetary system, derived from the letter taken from the Latin denarium. Per the Notre Dame Department of Special Collections website conducted by numismatic scholar Louis Jordan, “Lawful money was the term used for the lawful exchange rate of 6s to the Spanish milled dollar. This would rate the penny at 12 to the shilling or 72 to the dollar.”<sup>23</sup> The denomination format also bears a similarity

THE BRITISH PRIZE SHIP *Anna Maria* TO THE MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL within which is the descriptive footnote: “Other crew members and passengers from various prizes were granted permission to depart on board the *Creighton*” (later renamed the *William*). *Naval Documents of The American Revolution*, p. 881.

22. See John M. Kleeberg, “The Continental Dollar: British Medals or American Coins?” *The Journal of Early American Numismatics*, Dec. 2018, pp 159–211. See also Resolute Americana Continental Dollar Collection. [coins.nd.edu/ColCoin/ColCoinText/StatePatterns.1.html](http://coins.www.collectors-society.com/wcm/CoinCustomSetView.aspx?s=17828).

23. [coins.nd.edu/ColCoin/ColCoinText/StatePatterns.1.html](http://coins.nd.edu/ColCoin/ColCoinText/StatePatterns.1.html). “Lawful Money” was a result of the 1751 Currency Reform Act. This act applied only to the New England colonies and put them on the Lawful Money standard.

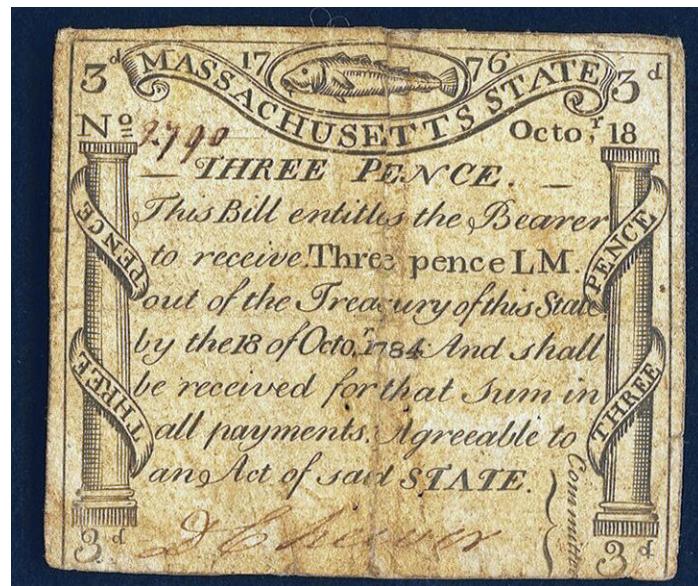


Figure 10. Massachusetts State Three Pence issue of October 18, 1776. 2016 May 4 Selections from the Eric P. Newman Collection Part I Currency Internet Auction - Dallas 241618, lot 86081. Courtesy Heritage Auctions.

to the Massachusetts currency bills of 1776. For example, a codfish three pence bill of the October 18, 1776, emission indicates the bill is valued “Three pence LM.” and “3d” is printed in each of the four corners (Fig. 10). The front of this bill was engraved by Paul Revere and the back design is a pine tree engraved by Nathaniel Hurd. There was also a two pence bill issued in this emission, yet no “one penny” Massachusetts currency bills were issued in 1776. The Janus copper is also stamped with a denomination. The indication of “½ D” on the obverse and the comparatively smaller size of the Janus copper is correspondingly a “halfpenny” valuation.

The report of the *William*’s passenger indicates that the reason the “copper tokens” were struck was to provide small change as “the people of America, being in want of change since the coining of the paper currency, used frequently to divide the dollar notes into halves, and again in quarters and eighths...”. It is possible that the passenger made an error in his observation and it was not “dollar notes” being divided but the lower value bills of 3d, 4d, 5d, 6d, 9d, 10d, etc. of the Massachusetts currency. These denominations were part of the June 16, 1776, emission. This is also supposing that the altered notes (or bills) were the Massachusetts Colony and State currency and not the Continental Currency bills that were also in circulation at the time and which were denominated in dollars.

If the passenger on the *William* was more accurate in his observations then perhaps the “1 d” on the Pine Tree copper was not to signify “one penny” but actually “one dollar.” This is admittedly an outside the box concept and likely not correct but is mentioned here should someone raise the question based on the statement that the “copper tokens” were “to pass for half dollars, quarters, eighths and sixteenths, agreeably to the stamps upon them...”. Perhaps the Pine Tree copper was designed to circulate as a 1-dollar coin. The Janus copper, which bears the denomination mark “½ D” would then be a half-dollar (and not a halfpenny), and the Indian copper, on which due to legend loss the presence of a denomination mark is uncertain, might fall in between.<sup>24</sup> Valuing the Pine Tree copper as a dollar would seem to place it into the Continental Currency accounting system, while a valuation of one penny implies the use of the Massachusetts standard. However, based on the use of the “L.M.”/Lawful Money designation it appears likely the intent was to use the Massachusetts standard and the valuation of one penny is correct.

It is clear that many of the persons permitted to sail on the *William* were not natives of Boston and were stranded in the hostile city temporarily while they awaited clearance to leave for Britain. The unknown passenger who wrote of the “copper tokens” may have been unfamiliar or confused by the different standards

24. ½-Dollar Continental Currency notes were made in quantity in 1776.



Figure 11. Seal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

of paper money circulating in Massachusetts in 1776. What he believed were altered Continental Currency dollar bills may have actually been Massachusetts State pence notes (or bills) and what he believed were coins issued as fractions of a dollar may have actually been those of a penny and fractions of a penny. The passenger may have had limited experience transacting in American paper currency, but there is no doubt he saw the newly issued “copper tokens” and was impressed enough to pass along the news when he arrived in England.

#### THE ARMS OF THE COLONY WHERE THEY ARE STRUCK

A key descriptor of the copper tokens mentioned in the 1776 newspaper article is that they “bear the arms of the colony where they are struck.” The pine tree is an indisputable symbol of the colony and state of Massachusetts. The website of the Massachusetts Historical Society notes: “The pine tree alludes both to the Sons of Liberty flag of the Revolutionary era and to earlier Massachusetts pine tree coins.” Two pine trees flank the standing Native American figure on the seal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (Fig. 11). The eastern white pine was prized by the early colonists due to its suitability in the construction of ship masts. The abundance of pine trees in Massachusetts were an undeniable asset and quickly became associated with the colony. The pine tree and the standing Native American (a version of which appears on the Indian copper) are clearly representative of the “arms of the colony” of Massachusetts.

It is now proposed that two of the three pieces of 1776 Massachusetts copper coinage employ representations of the “arms of the colony” as the obverse



Figure 12. 2004 (HA) Orlando, FL Signature Sale 339, lot 12115. Anonymous. Ca. 225–212 BC. AR didrachm or quadrigatus (20 mm, 6.72 g). Laureate head of Janus. Courtesy of Heritage Auctions.

design. The emblematic depiction present on the Janus copper has proven to be far more obscure. Janus is the ancient Roman god of beginnings and endings. Typically shown with two heads facing in opposite directions, depictions of Janus on Roman coins are prevalent (Fig. 12).

The 1776 Massachusetts halfpenny copper coin distinctly depicts a figure with three heads. However, the “Janus” copper is a misnomer that has stuck. In 1875, Crosby noted:

This piece, which has been known as the “Janus Copper” we think may more properly be called the Massachusetts Halfpenny. It has three heads combined instead of two as in a Janus head. This device resembles the Brahma of Hindoo mythology, which represents the past, the present, and the future.<sup>25</sup>

In order to crack the code of the “Janus” on the Massachusetts halfpenny it should be compared to the other two pieces in the series. As stated previously, both the Pine Tree and the Indian coppers employ symbols related to Massachusetts. Therefore, the three headed figure on the Massachusetts halfpenny should also relate to Massachusetts in some fashion. But how? If we apply what we know about the production of these pieces there is a possible explanation to this dilemma. What follows is a theoretical interpretation of the “Janus” symbol on the 1776 Massachusetts halfpenny. The true nature of this element may yet remain inscrutable.

As previously discussed, the Indian copper was most likely minted prior to the Pine Tree and the Janus coppers based on the use of the word “PROVINCE” in the legend in lieu of “STATE.” The Boston mint that produced these three pieces likely struck the Indian copper sometime around June, 1776. In addition, the Indian copper was overstruck on an Irish halfpenny. The Indian copper was possibly a test strike since the copper planchets needed to strike further pieces

<sup>25</sup> Crosby, p. 304.

were not yet available. Soon after the Indian copper was struck, the Declaration of Independence was signed, and the provinces and colonies in America became states. This made the Indian copper die obsolete and required new dies with "STATE" in the legend.<sup>26</sup> These new dies would be used to strike the Pine Tree one penny and Janus halfpenny denominations. As both of these coins were sized differently than the Indian copper perhaps the minters contemplated an alternate plan for the series to coincide with the necessary modification of the legend.

Conceivably soon after July 4, 1776, the raw copper needed to strike additional coins arrived at the Boston mint and production on the next series of coins commenced. The die for the Indian copper was abandoned and another design was adopted for the halfpenny. This new halfpenny may have retained the symbolism of the prior Indian copper and utilized the figure of the Native American for the central element. It can be contemplated that the "Janus" is three identical Native American heads that the engraver's artistic license arranged in a conjoined trio to suit a classical style befitting a coin.

To make this association we must recognize that the symbolism of the Native American went well beyond the disguises the Boston Patriots chose for the Tea Party in 1773. In *Exemplar of Liberty: Native America and the Evolution of Democracy* the authors describe how the image of the Indian permeated the culture of American rebellion:

The tea dumpers chose their symbols with utmost care. As the imported tea symbolized British tyranny and taxation, so the image of the Indian, and the Mohawk disguise, represented its antithesis: a "trademark" of an emerging American identity and voice for liberty in a new land.<sup>27</sup>

Further, they state:

The image of the Indian (particularly the Mohawk) also appears at about the same time, in the same context, in revolutionary songs, slogans and engravings. Paul Revere, whose "Midnight Rides" became legend in the hands of Longfellow, played a crucial role in forging this sense of iden-

26. The *Boston Gazette* of Aug. 26, 1776, contains a report by the "Committee of Inspection" of "Dunstable, Massachusetts State" which was dated Aug. 19, 1776. It is presumed that citizens of Massachusetts began to refer to Massachusetts as a "state" sometime prior to this date.

27. Donald A. Grinde, Jr. and Bruce E. Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty: Native America and the Evolution of Democracy*, Online Version (1990), Chapter 7. Pages unnumbered. [www.ratical.org/many\\_worlds/6Nations/EoL/chp7.html](http://www.ratical.org/many_worlds/6Nations/EoL/chp7.html).



Figure 13. Vignette for the title page of *The Royal American Magazine*. “To the left, seated, is an allegory of America as a Native American, bare-chested with a feather skirt. In her right hand is a bow, and in her left a fan of feathers and a calumet pipe.” Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society. [www.americanantiquarian.org/Inventories/Revere/newspapers.htm](http://www.americanantiquarian.org/Inventories/Revere/newspapers.htm).

ity, contributing to the revolutionary cause a set of remarkable engravings that cast as America’s first national symbol an American Indian woman....<sup>28</sup>

Paul Revere’s use of the “Indian Princess” allegory for America appears on the title page of *The Royal American Magazine* (Fig. 13).

However, Revere also engraved the symbolic Indian man. This is seen on a July 28, 1775, Colony of Massachusetts Bay Note of Credit. Per the description provided by the American Antiquarian Society, the border illustration includes a classically styled bare headed Native American man (Fig. 14).

Revere’s engraving on the masthead of the January 19, 1774, *Essex Journal and Merrimack Packet* (Fig. 15) again utilizes the Native American man. In this example there is a resemblance to the depiction on the Massachusetts Bay Colony seal.

It may be inferred that in proper context the Indian woman was considered to be the allegorical symbol for America as a whole, while the Indian man symbolized the colony and state of Massachusetts. The Indian man may have also symbolized rebellion, liberty, and unity against tyranny. The three bare-headed,

28. Ibid.

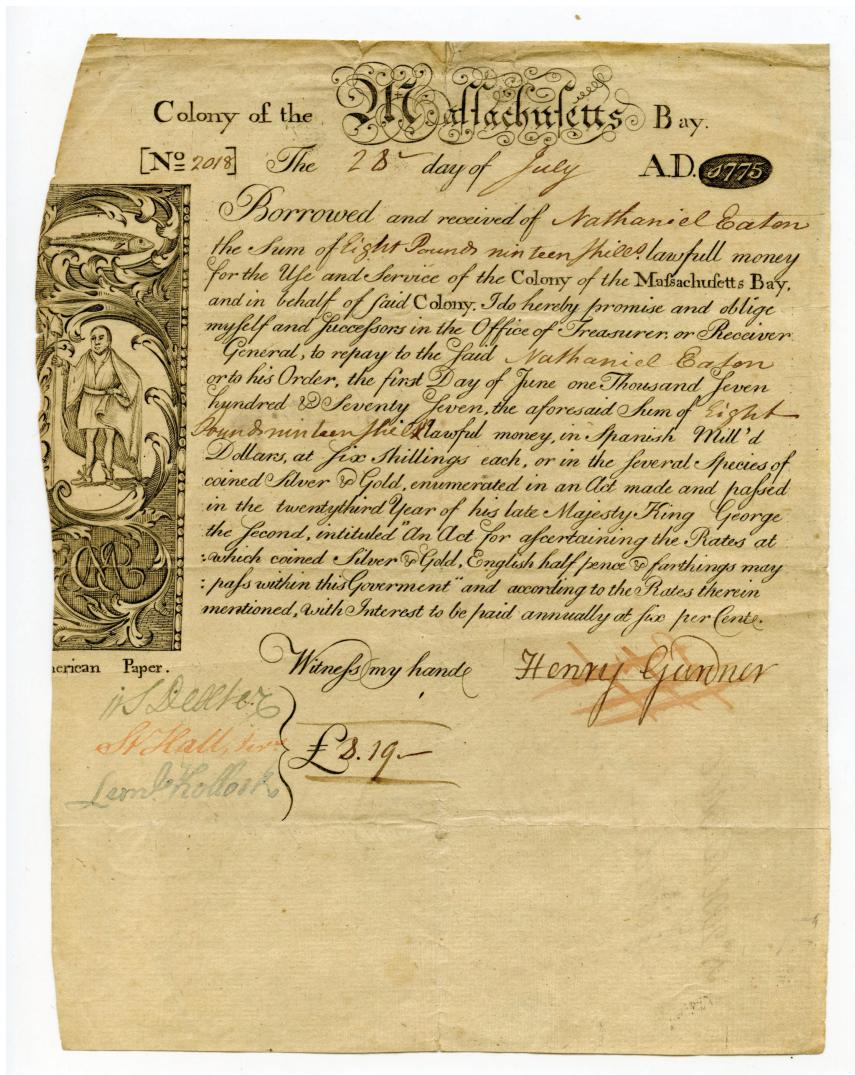


Figure 14. Promissory note described as a "Note of credit July 28, 1775;" front. "At the top is a fish; beneath that is a standing Native American figure of a man holding liberty pole and cap and beneath, the monogram/initials 'CMB.' Beneath is the text '[A]merican Paper.'" Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society. [www.americanantiquarian.org/Inventories/Revere/currency.htm#f1](http://www.americanantiquarian.org/Inventories/Revere/currency.htm#f1).



Figure 15. Masthead of The Essex Journal and Merimack [sic] Packet. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

short-haired male heads on the Janus Copper are apropos to a classical depiction of the emblematic Native American in Massachusetts during the year 1776. The three heads were perhaps chosen solely for artistic effect or may have been sourced as representative of the three acclaimed Native Americans who aided the Plymouth Colony Pilgrims: Squanto, Samoset, and Massasoit. This perception of the “Janus” device is tenuous, however it can now be maintained that all three pieces of 1776 Massachusetts coinage “bear the arms of the colony” of Massachusetts.

The reverses of the “copper tokens” are not described in the report of the passenger on the *William*, however for further elucidation into the origin of these coins the shared reverse design of the ‘Goddess of Liberty’ should also be addressed. In all three pieces an allegory of Liberty is depicted seated upon a globe with her staff and cap. There is an animal at her feet, which numismatists originally deemed a dog or a watchdog. However, as previously clarified by J. Hammond Trumbull in 1875,<sup>29</sup> the animal is assuredly a cat.

So in early American prints the cat appears at the feet of Liberty as for example in one representing the destruction of the tea in Boston in 1773 probably engraved by Paul Revere. I find it again on a rude type metal cut on the title page of a Connecticut Almanac in 1779 and I could refer you to several other examples of its occurrence in prints of the Revolutionary period I am not aware that the dog has ever appeared as an emblem of American liberty.

29. *American Journal of Numismatics*, Vol. X, No. 2, Oct. 1875, p. 35 “The Cat on the Pine Tree Coppers: Design of ‘Fugios.’”



Figure 16. Revolutionary War: "Liberty Triumphant or the Downfall of Oppression." "Prohibitively Rare Copper Engraved Cartoon Celebrating the Boston Tea Party." August 25–26, 2018. Americana & Political - Dallas 6183, lot 43019. Courtesy of Heritage Auctions.



Figure 17. Enlarged view of Liberty with cat at her feet. Revolutionary War: "Liberty Triumphant or the Downfall of Oppression." "Prohibitively Rare Copper Engraved Cartoon Celebrating the Boston Tea Party." August 25–26, 2018. Americana & Political - Dallas 6183, lot 43019. Courtesy of Heritage Auctions.

The print Trumbull describes as “probably engraved by Paul Revere” may be the 1773 unsigned work known as “Liberty Triumphant or the Downfall of Oppression.” Today, however, this engraving is not thought to be the work of Revere. It is now attributed to Henry Dawkins,<sup>30</sup> a Colonial engraver who resided in 1773 in Philadelphia. Nonetheless, in the upper right corner is a depiction of seated Liberty with a cat curled at her feet (Figs. 16 and 17). She is identified in the key as number 14, “The Goddess of Liberty addressing herself to Fame and pointing to her Sons.”

The association of the “Goddess of Liberty” to the American cause prevailed throughout Boston and New England. In April 1774 the *Boston Post-Boy* advertised Paul Revere’s engraving of John Hancock from *The Royal American Magazine*. Hancock is noted as being “supported by the Goddess of Liberty” (Figs. 18 and 19).

Additionally, the liberty poles which sprang up across the countryside were “dedicated to the Goddess LIBERTY” (Figs. 20 and 21).

We hear from Kensington, that a few days since, a person was instantly killed, as he was assisting in erecting a pole, to be dedicated to the Goddess LIBERTY. We don’t learn the particulars.

The globe upon which the Goddess of Liberty is seated is striking and a hallmark of the 1776 Massachusetts copper coinage series. The Goddess of Liberty is modelled after the figure of Britannia on the English halfpenny and farthing coins of the era. Britannia is seated on a globe, yet Britannia’s globe is a plain sphere (or celestial globe), which is a relic of elements of Roman-era coins. The Goddess of Liberty’s globe, however, is festooned with bold longitude and latitude lines (reminiscent of an armillary sphere or lined terrestrial globe).<sup>31</sup> Versions of similar design were used on later eighteenth-century American copper coins (Fig. 22). It is unclear when this design first appeared, though the engraving of “America Triumphant and Britannia in Distress” from 1782 also shows the concept, albeit related to an allegory of America seated on a lined quarter terrestrial globe (Fig. 23).

Globes and spheres were also utilized as elements of heraldry. Colonial engravers were very familiar with all aspects of heraldry as a customary component of their business was heraldic bookplates based on family crests. An engraver would typically have a pattern book available for this purpose. This image from a plate within the 1780 publication of *A Complete Body of Heraldry, Volume II* (Fig. 24) displays heraldic lined terrestrial globe (#57), and armillary sphere (#58) and northern hemisphere demi-globe under an eagle (#69).

30. The Library of Congress and other sources attribute this work to Dawkins. [www.loc.gov/item/2016648427/](http://www.loc.gov/item/2016648427/).

31. Analysis of the Goddess of Liberty’s globe was recommended to the author in conversation via email with Q. David Bowers, December 6, 2018.

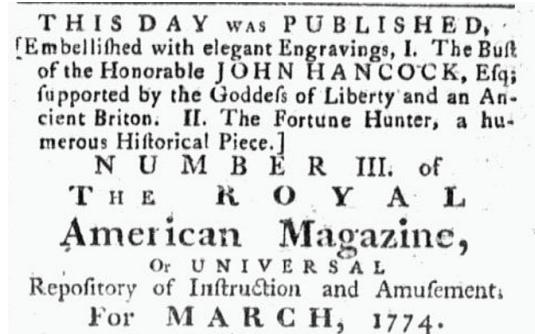


Figure 18. *Boston Post-Boy*, April 11, 1774.

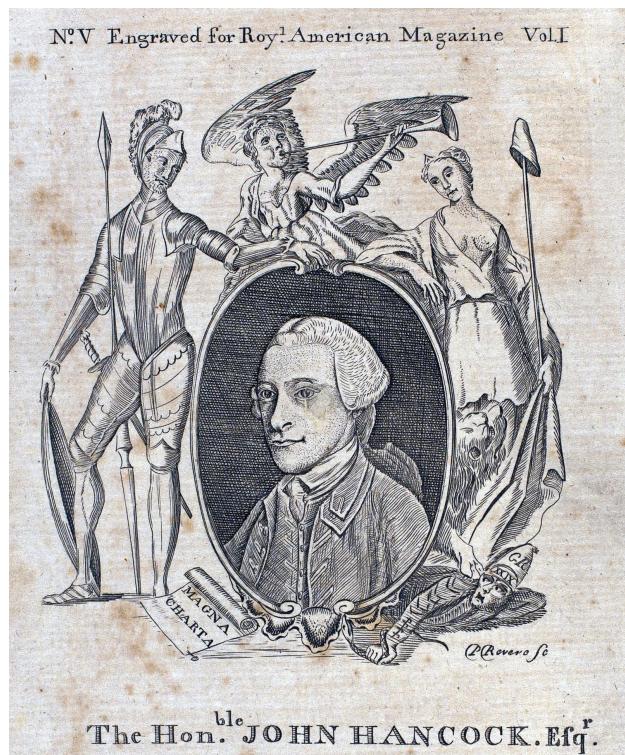


Figure 19. The Hon<sup>ble</sup> John Hancock, Esqr. Engraved bust portrait of John Hancock (1737-1793) inset in a shaded oval for the *Royal American Magazine* (frontispiece for the March 1774 issue). "... a figure of Liberty with partially-exposed chest and liberty cap on pole in her hand. Next to her is an allegory of Fame, a winged angel blowing a horn to the right." Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society. [www.americanantiquarian.org/Inventories/Revere/royal.htm#f4](http://www.americanantiquarian.org/Inventories/Revere/royal.htm#f4).

We hear from Kensington, that a few days since, a person was instantly killed, as he was assisting in erecting a pole, to be dedicated to the Goddess LIBERTY. We don't learn the particulars.

Figure 20. *Norwich Packet* (Connecticut), October 7, 1774.



Figure 21. "RAISING THE LIBERTY POLE." 1776. painted by F. A. Chapman; engraved by John C. McRae, NY ca. 1875. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Figure 22. 1787 Immunis Columbia Copper, obverse. 30 mm. Whitman-5680. October 2018 Baltimore. Lot 6096. Courtesy of Stack's Bowers Galleries.



Figure 23. A crude allegory of American prosperity and victory over England. Below the image an "Explanation" reads: "I. America sitting on that quarter of the globe with the Flag of the United States displayed over her head; holding in one hand the Olive branch, inviting the ships of all nations to partake of her commerce; and in the other hand supporting the Cap of Liberty..." [Boston : s.n., 1782]. Courtesy of the Library of Congress. [www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003690789/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003690789/).

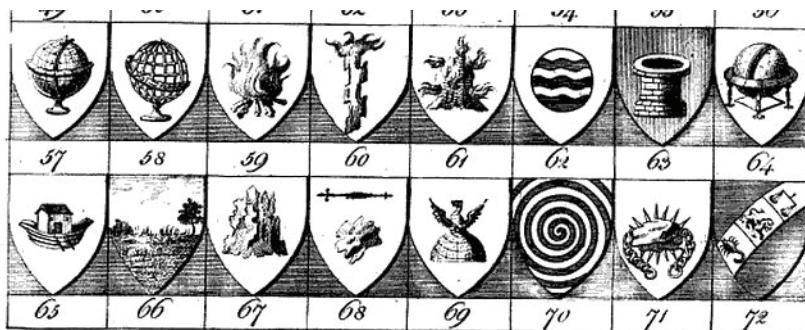


Figure 24. *A Complete Body of Heraldry*, Vol. II, Edmondson (London 1780) pl. 5.

COINS	Weights	Value	Langfull Money		Silver Coins	Weights	Value	oz.	dwt.	gr.	GOLD	oz.	dwt.	gr.	SILVER	oz.	dwt.	gr.	
			oz.	dwt.				oz.	dwt.	gr.	old tenor	oz.	dwt.	gr.	£	s	£	s	
Guinea	0. 5. 9	10. 10. -	28		Eng. Crown	0. 19. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$	2. 10.												
Half D.	2. 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ . 5. 5	14			Half. Ditto	9. 16 $\frac{1}{2}$	1. 5.												
Moidore	6. 22. 13. 10.	36 $\frac{1}{2}$			Dollar	17. 12	2. 5.												
Half D.	3. 11. 6. 15.	18 $\frac{1}{2}$			Half. Ditto	8. 18	1. 2. 6												
Dubloon or 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ P.	17. 8. 33. -	88 $\frac{1}{2}$			Quarter D.	4. 9	1. 3												
Half D.	8. 16. 16. 10.	44 $\frac{1}{2}$																	
Pistole	4. 8. 8. 5.	22 $\frac{1}{2}$						1. 0. 0.	£38. 0. 0								2. 10. 0		
Half D.	2. 4. 4. 2. 6	11 $\frac{1}{2}$						10. 0.	19. -								1. 5.		
Double Jeannette								5. 0.	9. 10. -								12. 6		
Double Hurd. P.	18. 10. 36. -	96 $\frac{1}{2}$						2. 0.	3. 16. -								5.		
Single Jeannette								1. 0.	1. 18. -								2. 6		
Single Hurd. P.	9. 5. 18. -	48 $\frac{1}{2}$						0. 12.	19. -								1. 3		
Half D.	4. 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ . 9. -	24 $\frac{1}{2}$						0. 6.		9. 6							0. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$		
Quarter D.	2. 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ . 4. 10. -	12 $\frac{1}{2}$						0. 3.		4. 9							0. 3 $\frac{3}{4}$		
ENGRAV'D Printed & Sold by NAT HURD.												0. 1.	1. 7	0. 0.	1 $\frac{1}{4}$				

Figure 25. Nathaniel Hurd (1729/30-1777) Exchange Table, undated. Boston. "Moidore", "Double Johannes", and "Single Johannes" rates included. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.



Figure 26. PORTUGAL: João V, 1750–1777, AR 20 reis (15 mm, 0.66 g), Lisbon, ND, KM-235, Gomes-08. Obverse. Auction 26, September, 2016. Lot 1390. Courtesy of Stephen Album Rare Coins. Scale 4:1.

An armillary sphere is an element of the arms of Portugal. An armillary sphere design appears frequently on eighteenth-century coins of Portugal and Brazil (then a colony of Portugal). Due to the presence of the Portuguese in trade routes with the Americas and Boston's position as a major Atlantic port, Portuguese coinage did pass in Boston during this time. The Portuguese gold "joes", "double joes", and "moidores" were current in England and the colonies in the eighteenth century (Fig. 25). Though these gold coins did not employ the element of the Portuguese armillary sphere, silver coins of the era did (Fig. 26). The engraver of the 1776 Massachusetts copper coins may have borrowed the spirit of the design to create a more aesthetically pleasing and accurate globe.

It has now been shown that all three pieces of the 1776 Massachusetts copper coinage could be interpreted to "bear the arms of the colony" of Massachusetts for the obverse design. In addition, the symbolism and composition of the reverse "Goddess of Liberty" figure is appropriate and correct to the year 1776.

#### THEY WERE MISERABLY EXECUTED

Noteworthy to the study of the report made by the passenger on the *William* is the statement that the copper tokens were "miserably executed." Without this description it is only conjecture that the copper tokens to which he refers are the 1776 Massachusetts coppers. With these two words he encourages the presumption. To an Englishman in the eighteenth century the three coins were without a

We hear it is proposed, that after three months, the currency of all Copper Coin made of bad metal, or wanting in weight, is to be totally suppressed, and that the rest is to pass at the rate of 15 for an eighth part of a dollar. And if it shall appear that there is not a sufficiency for common use, that it will be all called in, and a new impression struck of Continental Copper Coin, of a larger size; twelve of which is to pass for an eighth of a dollar, after which no other Coppers are to pass current. (Mr. HOLT'S JOURNAL.)

Figure 27. *Constitutional Gazette* (New York, NY) June 29, 1776.

doubt “miserably executed.” The lettering of the legends is misaligned and amateurish, the design elements border on cartoonish, and the minting process was faulty. The Massachusetts Historical Society describes the minting error on the Pine Tree copper as: “the shift in the coin’s reverse plane where the die sank—as a raised line around seated Liberty.” Nonetheless, the three coins of the 1776 Massachusetts copper coinage series hold an archaic beauty to a modern-day enthusiast of American colonial coinage.

A fuller reading of the statement of the passenger on the *William* can even tell us a bit more: “...where they had already begun to stamp the several pieces allowed and approved of by the Congress, but they were miserably executed...”. The “but” in this account suggests that the minting had ceased as a result of the coins falling below expectations. Very few “copper tokens” were minted at Boston in 1776. As a result, we only have the three known survivors of the Massachusetts copper coinage series in existence today.

#### OTHER CONTEMPORARY NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS OF 1776 COINAGE

Two additional accounts of American coin production in 1776 have been utilized in study of the Continental Dollar coins of that date. The earlier of the reports is from the *Constitutional Gazette* (New York, NY) June 29, 1776 (Fig. 27):

We hear it is proposed, that after three months, the currency of all Copper Coin of bad metal, or wanting in weight, is to be totally suppressed

and that the rest is to pass at the rate of 15 for an eighth part of a dollar. And if it shall appear that there is not a sufficiency for common use, that it will be all called in, and a new impression struck of Continental Copper Coin, of a larger size; twelve of which is to pass for an eighth(h) of a dollar, after which no other Coppers are to pass current. (Mr. HOLT'S JOURNAL.)

On an initial reading this article appears to be a reference to an alternative series of coinage not related to the Massachusetts coppers. When we evaluate further it will be shown to be applicable to the Pine Tree copper. The first step is to compare the rate of valuation. The new “larger size” (i.e., larger than a halfpenny) copper coin is to pass 12 for an eighth of a dollar. In New York the Spanish milled dollar was valued at 8 shillings (or 96 pence).<sup>32</sup> An eighth of a dollar is equal to a 1-real coin. Hence in this description the “new impression of Continental Copper Coin” is in fact a one penny coin. The timing of this report is noteworthy as it perfectly corresponds with the Pine Tree copper penny struck sometime between July and September 1776.

Additionally, it should be remarked that the source of this news was “Mr. Holt's Journal.” This was John Holt's *New-York Journal, or General Advertiser*. Holt actively supported patriotic causes since the days of the Stamp Act protests. He also collaborated with Paul Revere and the Sons of Liberty to disseminate news to the general population. Per the *Journal of the American Revolution*:<sup>33</sup>

Holt, who apparently felt no pressure to keep a lid on evidence of the New England alarm system, was a Patriot supporter and one of Revere's contacts during his previous rides back and forth to Philadelphia. Revere delivered newspapers and other intelligence directly to Holt's New York print shop, and Holt's Journal printed Revere's name in conjunction with other rides at least four times in mid-1774. More so, as a trusted Patriot messenger throughout the northern colonies, Revere delivered additional perspective and insight with his intelligence, which was certainly welcomed by distant printers and associates.

32. A helpful discussion of colonial coinage rates is to be found at University of Notre Dame, Department of Special Collections website. “The Comparative Value of Money between Britain and the Colonies.”

33. Todd Andrlik, “How Paul Revere's Ride Was Published and Censored in 1775,” *Journal of the American Revolution*, Feb. 3, 2015. [allthingsliberty.com/2015/02/how-paul-reveres-ride-was-published-and-censored-in-1775/](http://allthingsliberty.com/2015/02/how-paul-reveres-ride-was-published-and-censored-in-1775/).

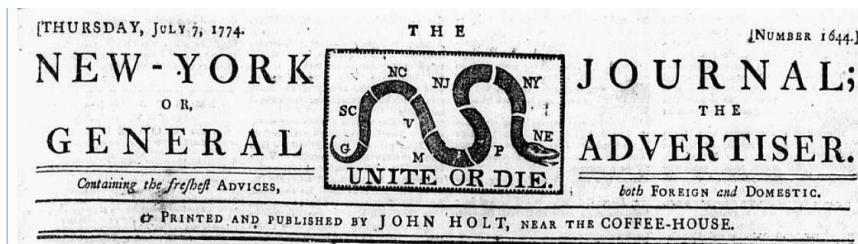


Figure 28. *New York Journal or General Advertiser*, July 7, 1774.

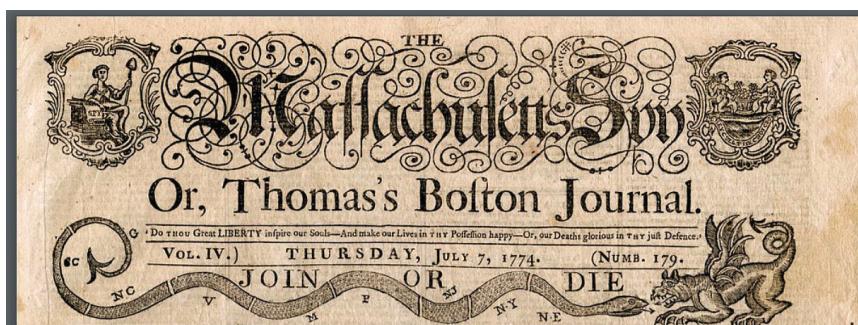


Figure 29. *The Massachusetts Spy*, July 7, 1774. Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society.

In June, 1774 Holt became the first Colonial newspaper publisher to revive Benjamin Franklin's "Join or Die" cut snake political cartoon for his masthead.<sup>34</sup> The motto was revised to "Unite or Die" (Fig. 28). By July the *Massachusetts Spy* followed suit with a version engraved by Paul Revere (Fig. 29).

This opens the door to the prospect that Paul Revere may have been the conduit for the news of "the new impression struck of Continental Copper Coin." There will be further commentary on Revere in the next section.

The second reference to coinage appears in the British newspapers in December 1776 and January 1777. This report also appears in the *American Journal of Numismatics* in 1891.<sup>35</sup>

From the London Chronicle, Dec. 21, 1776. Letters from an officer of the 64th Reg. in York Island to his friend in town. "The Congress have

34. Christopher F. Minty, "'UNITE OR DIE': John Holt's New-York Journal; or, the General Advertiser and the Imagery of Allegiance," *The Junto A Group Blog on Early American History*, January 21, 2016. [earlyamericanists.com/2016/01/21/forming-his-political-principles-john-holts-new-york-journal-or-the-general-advertiser-and-the-imagery-of-allegiance/](http://earlyamericanists.com/2016/01/21/forming-his-political-principles-john-holts-new-york-journal-or-the-general-advertiser-and-the-imagery-of-allegiance/).

35. *American Journal of Numismatics*, October 1891, "Notes and Queries," p. 45.

established a Mint at Philadelphia, where they coin copper and silver pieces about the size of half a crown: In silver go for twelve shillings, in copper for fourteen pence."

The quoted portion of this excerpt, "The Congress have established a Mint at Philadelphia, where they coin copper and silver pieces about the size of half a crown: In silver go for twelve shillings, in copper for fourteen pence," is reproduced in additional newspapers of this time period. Notably the detail of "Letters from an officer of the 64th Reg. in York Island to his friend in town" is never seen again. The *London Chronicle* for 1776 is not readily available online to consult as to exactly how this report originally appeared in print. It is open to speculation if an "officer of the 64th Reg. in York Island" is the true source of this article.

Newspapers of the eighteenth century can be a confusing mishmash of bits and pieces of disjointed information. A subtitle of "Letters from an officer of the 64th Reg in York Island..." may have been used to start a column, the news of the letters was then stated only to be immediately followed by "The Congress has established a Mint a Philadelphia..." To our modern sensibilities these two news items would seem related, yet within an eighteenth-century newspaper this is not always the case.

A scan from the *Newcastle Weekly Courant*, January 4, 1777 (Fig. 30), demonstrates this discontinuity:

LONDON, Dec. 26

Extract of a letter from Jamaica, Oct. 28

"A vessel arrived at Port Royal, from the Havannah, has brought advice, that the Peace and Plenty, an American privateer of 26 guns, had put into that port in distress, having lost two thirds of her crew in an engagement with an English frigate, in which she is so miserably shattered, as to render her incapable of keeping the sea. The Spaniards, it is added, are supplying her with necessaries to refit, but have absolutely refused to assist the privateer with any military Articles." The Congress have established a mint at Philadelphia, where they coin copper and silver pieces about the size of half a crown; in silver they go for 12 s. in copper for 1 s. 2 d. - The Congress paper money being in such discredit, that all hoard the coin they possibly dare, seeing the desperate state they are hastening into.

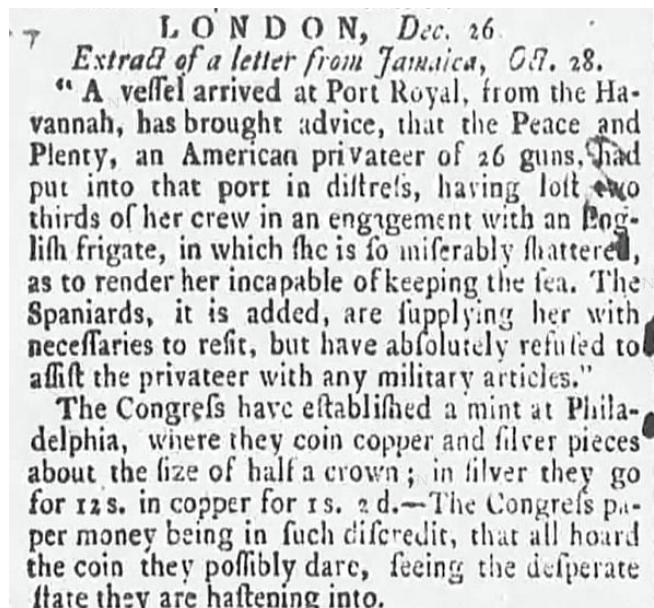


Figure 30. *Newcastle Weekly Courant*, January 4, 1777.

Regardless of the source, a summary of this coinage appeared in the 1776–1777 British newspapers. The first task to evaluate this report is to attempt to narrow the date on which it originated. Similar to the message of the passenger on the *William* this news comes from America and is only seen in British newspapers. If we estimate a two-month travel time, that places us in late October 1776. This is within a month or so of the first appearance of the story carried by the passenger on the *William*.

The account of the passenger on the *William* also mentions Philadelphia: "a quantity of copper having been imported at Philadelphia in a Dutch ship for that purpose, which has been distributed to the other provinces." Could the "mint at Philadelphia" information be the report of the passenger on the *William* with the details altered and muddled? The passenger also makes a reference to silver coins, "their size corresponds with the piece in silver which they are intended to pass for." This is where he is mistaken as he thought the coins were dollars and fractions of a dollar when they were actually minted as a penny and fractions of a penny, but the mention of silver coins may have spurred the news that silver coins were also minted in Philadelphia. Unfortunately, the report of the mint at Philadelphia lacks the evidence needed in order for us to be certain of the coinage to which it refers.

Tangentially related to this discussion, is the final sentence of the report of the passenger on the *William*: "Before they got the copper they had it in idea to have made them of pewter, but on consideration, they remembered it would encourage the trade of the mother country, and it was therefore on that account set aside." England, and her Cornwall tin mines, had a near monopoly on pewter production. This statement implies that pewter was not to be used in the production of American coinage, not for the reasoning that a quantity of pewter was unavailable, but that it would be a betrayal to American independence.

#### THE "ENGINE FOR COINING" AND THE WORKSHOP OF PAUL REVERE

A problematic aspect for some in establishing the authenticity of the 1776 Massachusetts copper coinage is the lack of solid evidence of a coining press in Boston to strike the coins. Hull's Massachusetts Mint stopped producing silver coins by 1682.<sup>36</sup> Toward the end of the production, these coins are thought to have been made on a screw press in contrast to those struck by hand or on a rocker press earlier. Little is known about the construction of this screw press, but it is thought that it may have been obtained when John Hull visited England in 1669–1670.<sup>37</sup> If so, it is possible the screw press had relatively advanced capabilities as it was during the reign of Charles II that the Tower mint's use of a screw press became the preferred method to mint copper and silver coins. The website of the Museums Victoria Collections notes:<sup>38</sup>

Finally in 1651 a third French engineer, Pierre Blondeau was brought to London. Charles I had been executed in 1649. The Mint had been taken over by the Commonwealth of England when he had fled London and was still using the hammered method of production. Under Oliver Cromwell, Blondeau the engineer and Thomas Simon the die engraver produced a series of coins of exceptional quality employing a screw press. The Restoration of Charles II saw a return to hammering for a short time but the poor state of the coinage required attention. Charles II recalled Blondeau from Paris and sent for the Roettier brothers, engravers from the Netherlands to establish a new machine struck coinage from 1662.

36. The Mint contract expired June 3, 1682, and was not renewed.

37. Louis Jordan, *John Hull: The Mint and the Economics of Massachusetts Coinage* (Colonial Coin Collectors Club, 2002), p. 93.

38. Museums Victoria Collections, The Tower Mint, 1300–1809. [collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/3766](http://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/3766).

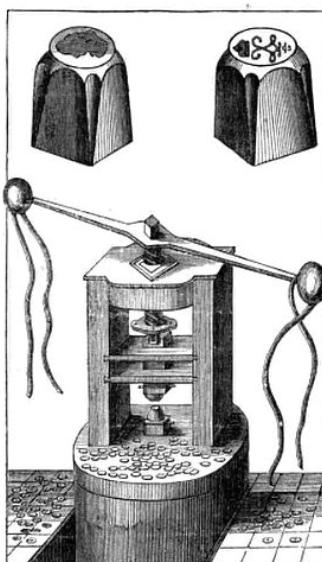


Figure 31. "Records of the Coinage of Scotland," Patrick, 1876, p lii.

An example of a late seventeenth-century screw press for coining is shown in *Records of the Coinage of Scotland* (1876) (Fig. 31).

There is no direct evidence detailing what became of Hull's screw press when his mint ceased operations, however, an oft repeated reference is made to the inventory of the estate of Boston silversmith John Coney in 1722.<sup>39</sup> Within the inventory is listed "An Engine for Coining with all Utensils belonging thereto" valued at £10 10s. The specifics of this "Engine for Coining" are not known but it may have been the old screw press of the Massachusetts Mint. It is thought that John Coney may have obtained the Massachusetts Mint's screw press since he is believed to have been apprenticed to Hull.<sup>40</sup> Another consideration is that Coney was related by marriage to Jeremiah Dummer, a former apprentice to John Hull.<sup>41</sup> Whatever the case and whatever the source, the relevance to our topic is that an "Engine for Coining" existed in Boston as late as 1722. Also of interest is that Apollos Rivoire,<sup>42</sup> the father of Paul Revere, was apprenticed to Coney at the time of Coney's death in 1722.

39. Jordan, p. 94.

40. Sydney Philip Noe, *The Silver Coinage of Massachusetts* (Lawrence, MA: Quarterman Publications, 1974), p. 38.

41. Jordan, p. 94.

42. Apollos Rivoire later anglicized his name to "Paul Revere."

Rivoire should be considered the most obvious person to have received the “Engine for Coining” from Coney’s estate. Moreover, even if he did not own the press, he certainly knew where it was and would have had access to it. Another clue is possibly within the accounting records of the Coney estate. Rivoire still had three years remaining in his apprentice term when Coney died. This time was computed as an account receivable to the estate of £30. When Rivoire made his payment to the estate a note was made “cash recd for Paul Rivoire’s Time, more than it was prized at ... £10.”<sup>43</sup> Coincidentally Rivoire’s overpayment is nearly the same amount as was listed as the value of the “Engine for Coining,” leaving open the very real possibility that an exchange was made. If Rivoire took possession of the “Engine for Coining” then in all likelihood it passed to Paul Revere upon Rivoire’s death in 1754.<sup>44</sup>

A valuation of £10 for a coining screw press seems at first glance to be low<sup>45</sup> and it has been speculated that it was possibly as a result of the machinery being over fifty years old and well used.<sup>46</sup> However as machinery in those days was built to last, it is very possible that the same coining screw press that was used to strike Massachusetts silver in the 1670s could have been used to strike Massachusetts “copper tokens” in 1776. It should also be considered that in 1788 James Jarvis and the Copper Mint Co. paid £24 2s 4d<sup>47</sup> for two new stamping presses to assist in striking the first federal coppers.<sup>48</sup> Based on this comparison it would

43. David Hackett Fischer, *Paul Revere’s Ride* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), n. 2. [books.google.com/books?id=u\\_OwouAM3EAC&pg=PT384&lp=g=PT384&dq=apollos+rivoire+estate&source=bl&ots=8VXZH6weI&sig=ou9ICRPdaV9qkbvXK1IMg-QqD5Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi8o5m\\_jKffAhWkm-AKHFqnCYoQ6AEwEXoECAgQAO#v=onepage&q=apollos%20rivoire%20estate&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=u_OwouAM3EAC&pg=PT384&lp=g=PT384&dq=apollos+rivoire+estate&source=bl&ots=8VXZH6weI&sig=ou9ICRPdaV9qkbvXK1IMg-QqD5Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi8o5m_jKffAhWkm-AKHFqnCYoQ6AEwEXoECAgQAO#v=onepage&q=apollos%20rivoire%20estate&f=false). Quoting John Coney Inventory, Suffolk County Probate Records, File 4641.

44. Robert Martello, *Midnight Ride, Industrial Dawn: Paul Revere and the Growth of American Enterprise* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), p. 36. “Revere wrote the only surviving description of his father’s passing in a letter to his cousin in France: ‘My father was a Gold-smith. He died in the year 1754, he left no Estate but he left a good name and seven children, 3 sons & 4 daughters. I was the Eldest Son. I learned this trade of him and have carried on the business ever since.’” Martello indicates this quotation is from a letter dated October 6, 1781.

45. Per The National Archives (United Kingdom) online Currency Converter £10 10s in 1720 would have the spending power of £1,219.13 in 2017. [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result).

46. Noe, p. 39.

47. This sum was presumably calculated in the New York Pound standard which was valued one-third less than the British Pound.

48. Gary A. Trudgen, “The New-York Air Furnace,” *The Colonial Newsletter*, April 2017, p. 4537. See also: Randy Clark and Christopher R. McDowell, “Transcript of the 1788 Connecticut and Federal Mint Account Book,” *The Colonial Newsletter*, April 2017, pp. 4541–4569. Fugio coppers were minted in 1788 and backdated to 1787.

appear that a £10 10s valuation in 1722 for an “Engine for Coining and all Utensils Belonging thereto” would equate to a substantial, operational screw press.

In 1776 Paul Revere’s workshop was located at Clark’s Wharf near his home in North Square. Revere would have returned with his family from Watertown to his Boston home and workshop at the end of the siege in March, 1776. During the siege, Revere’s son Paul (age 15) was left in the home while the workshop was occupied by Isaac Clemens,<sup>49</sup> an engraver. There was a Clemens family in Boston that married into the Revere family,<sup>50</sup> but any possible relationship to Isaac Clemens has not been traced. Clemens is noted to having been “born in Boston;”<sup>51</sup> however, he is also referenced as a “London trained engraver and

49. Charles Ferris Gettemy, *The True Story of Paul Revere* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1905), pp. 126–28. Letter from Paul Revere to Rachel Revere, May 2, 1775. “My Dear Girl “I received your favor yesterday. I am glad you have got yourself ready. If you find that you cannot easily get a pass for the Boat, I would have you get a pass for yourself and children and effects. Send the most valuable first. I mean that you should send Beds enough for yourself and Children, my chest, your trunk, with books, Cloaths &c to the ferry tell the ferryman they are mine. I will provide a house here where to put them & will be here to receive them. After Beds are come over, come with the Children, except Paul. Pray order him by all means to keep at home that he may help bring the things to the ferry. Tell him not to come till I send for him. You must hire somebody to help you. You may get brother Thomas. Lett Isaac Clemens if he is a mind to take care of the shop and maintain himself there, he may, or do as he has a mind. Put sugar in a raisin cask or some such thing & such necessarys as we shall want. Tell Betty, My Mother, Mrs. Metcalf if they think to stay, as we talked at first, tell them I will supply them with all the cash & other things in my power but if they think to come away, I will do all in my power to provide for them, perhaps before this week is out there will be liberty for Boats to go to Notomy, and then we can take them all. If you send the things to the ferry send enough to fill a cart, them that are the most wanted. Give Mrs. Metcalf [the letter is torn at this place] in, their part of the money I don’t remember the sums, but perhaps they can. I want some linen and stockings very much. Tell Paul I expect he’ll behave himself well and attend to my business, and not be out of the way. My Kind love to our parents & our Children Brothers & Sisters & all friends.” “My Son. “It is now in your power to be serviceable to me, your Mother and yourself. I beg you will keep yourself at home or where your Mother sends you. Don’t you come away till I send you word. When you bring anything to the ferry tell them it is mine & mark it with my name. “Your loving Father “P.R.”

50. Esther Forbes, *Paul Revere and the World He Lived In* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), p. 477. Paul Revere’s brother John married Anna Clemens on June 26, 1764.

51. Alfred E. Jones, *The Loyalists of Massachusetts: Their Memorials, Petitions and Claims* (London: The Saint Catherine Press, 1930), p. 93. This reference also notes that a certificate of Andrew Cazneau indicates he “boarded at the house of William Hill, in New York, a brother-in-law of Clemens, who was a firm loyalist and was engaged in counterfeiting the American paper money.” Jones’ entry for William Hill on p. 164 states that he was a baker in Boston who removed to Shelburne, Nova Scotia. An advertisement in the *Massachusetts Gazette* of June 18, 1767, places Hill’s business “near Dr. Clark’s, North End.” This location would be near the Revere shop at Clark’s Wharf. There is a Boston marriage record for William Hill and Rebecca Clements dated August 21, 1760.

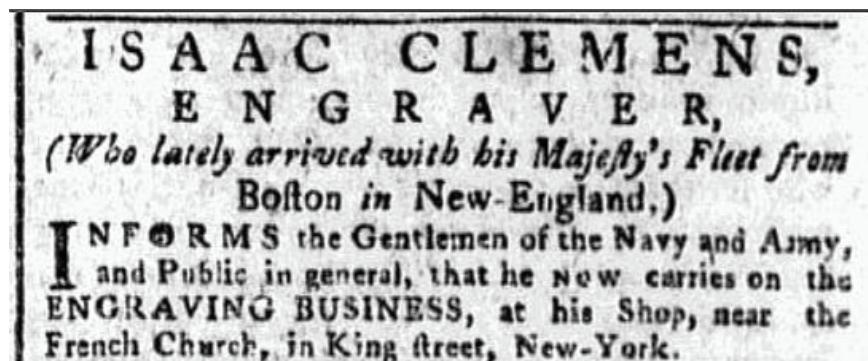


Figure 32. *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, November 11, 1776.

sometime silversmith" who arrived in Boston in 1774.<sup>52</sup> Isaac Clemens was also an "active Loyalist."<sup>53</sup>

That Clemens was a Loyalist is important and may have been the reason the Revere workshop was unmolested by the British during the siege.<sup>54</sup> It is also a window into society or perhaps the unique situation between these two men at the time. Paul Revere was one of the most ardent patriots in American history, yet he was able to trust a Loyalist to maintain and protect his workshop. There is also the intriguing possibility that Clemens returned to Boston at the behest of Revere specifically to work at his shop. In September, 1776 Clemens is listed with the "Enemies to the American States, commonly called Tories, gone and going to Staten Island (The Head Quarters of the forces of our late King)."<sup>55</sup> He appears in New York City, then under control of the British, beginning in October 1776 by advertisement (Fig. 32):

ISAAC CLEMENS,  
ENGRAVER,

(Who lately arrived with his Majesty's Fleet from Boston in New-England.) INFORMS the Gentlemen of the Navy and Army, and Public in general, that he now carries on the ENGRAVING BUSINESS, at his Shop, near the French Church, in King street, New-York.

52. Ross Allan C. Fox, *Quebec and Related Silver at the Detroit Institute of Arts* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978), p. 144.

53. *Ibid.*

54. Forbes, p. 283.

55. *New England Chronicle*, September 5, 1776.

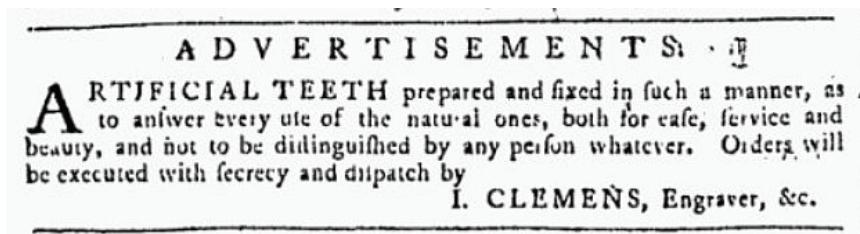


Figure 33. *The Quebec Gazette*, January 10, 1782.

While Clemens was in New York City he reportedly engaged in counterfeiting an “amount of over two million pounds sterling” of paper currency “and in this work he was encouraged and countenanced by many officers of the army and others in New York, for which he received no other satisfaction other than the hope and pleasure in having distressed and confused the rebels.”<sup>56</sup> By July 1780 Clemens was advertising in Quebec City. In January 1782 he advertised in *The Quebec Gazette* that he “prepared and fixed” “Artificial Teeth” (Fig. 33). This is noteworthy as it may be another example of a close working relationship between Isaac Clemens and Paul Revere.<sup>57</sup> In 1770 Revere advertised “Artificial Teeth” and his “Business as a Dentist” in the *Boston Gazette and Country Journal* (Fig. 34).<sup>58</sup> By 1786 Clemens is listed in the census of Shelburne, Nova Scotia,<sup>59</sup> and while there in 1787 he admitted to an attempt to counterfeit New York State currency notes.<sup>60</sup> Notably the Boston newspapers reported Isaac Clemens’ death in Shelburne, Nova Scotia, in 1805,<sup>61</sup> which leads to the conclusion that his death would be of interest to the city residents.

56. Jones, p. 93.

57. John E. Langdon, *American Silversmiths in British North America, 1776–1800* (Toronto: Stinehour Press, 1970), p. 45. “Then in January 1782 Clemens advertised that he prepared and fixed artificial teeth, a skill which he may have learned from Paul Revere.”

58. Francis Hill Bigelow, *Historic Silver of the Colonies and Its Makers* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1917), p. 100. This reference provides a transcript of Paul Revere’s advertisement and states it is from *The Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, August 20, 1770. See also, *Strange Remains: Paul Revere: The First American Forensic Dentist*, July 4, 2017. Revere’s identification of the body of Dr. Joseph Warren by means of his artificial teeth, a year after his burial in an unmarked grave at the Battle of Bunker Hill, was called “one of the earliest cases of forensic evidence used to identify a fallen American soldier.” <https://strangeremains.com/2017/07/04/paul-revere-the-first-american-forensic-dentist/>.

59. Nova Scotia Archives, Assessments for Shelburne and outlying communities, 1786 and 1787. [Novascotia.ca/archives/census/returnsMG1v957.asp?ID=1085](http://Novascotia.ca/archives/census/returnsMG1v957.asp?ID=1085).

60. *Worcester Magazine*, Volume 3, Issues 1–26, March–October, 1787, p. 181.

61. *Boston Commercial Gazette*, July 11, 1805. “In Shelburne (N.S.) Mr. Isaac Clemens, Engraver, formerly of this town —.”

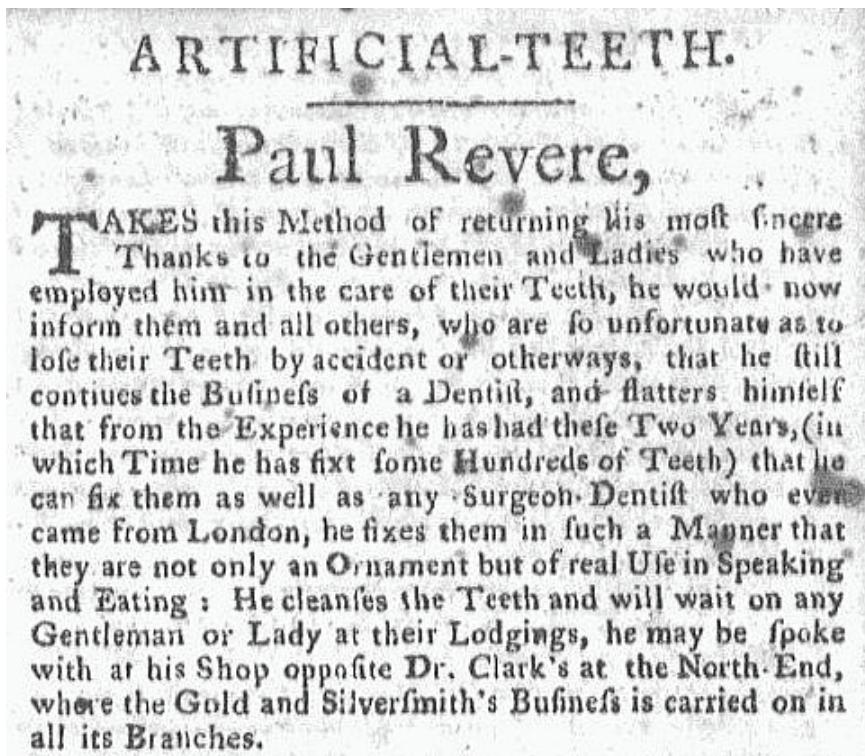


Figure 34. *The Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, ca. August 20, 1770.

ADVERTISEMENTS:

ARTIFICIAL TEETH prepared and fixed in such a manner, as to answer every use of the natural ones, both for ease, service and beauty, and not to be distinguished by any person whatever. Orders will be executed with secrecy and dispatch by

I. CLEMENS,

Engraver, &c.

ARTIFICIAL TEETH.

Paul Revere,

TAKES this Method of returning his most sincere Thanks to the Gentlemen and Ladies who have employed him in the care of their Teeth, he would now inform them and all others, who are so unfortunate as to lose their Teeth by accident or other ways, that he still continues the Business of a Dentist, and flatters himself that from the Ex-

perience he has had these Two Years, (in which Time he has fixt some Hundreds of Teeth) that he can fix them as well as any Surgeon Dentist who ever came from London, he fixes them in such a Manner that they are not only an Ornament but of real Use in Speaking and Eating: He cleanses the Teeth and will wait on any Gentleman or Lady at their Lodgings, he may be spoke with at his Shop opposite Dr Clark's at the North End, where the Gold and Silversmith's Business is carried on in all its Branches.

In April, 1776, Paul Revere was commissioned a major of infantry in the Massachusetts militia. As a result of this new responsibility, it is likely his time in the workshop was limited. His silversmith shop, however, presumably still continued transacting business while Revere was occupied with his military duties. Revere's son, Paul, was an apprentice in Revere's shop and it is reasonable to conclude based on the shop's output that one or more journeymen engravers were also employed there.<sup>62</sup> Joseph Callender, who later went on to cut some of the dies for the Massachusetts cents and half cents of 1787–1788, is thought to have been a journeyman in Revere's shop during this period.<sup>63</sup> Isaac Clemens may have remained there after the siege and during the summer of 1776 before he left for New York in September. It should be noted that the likely circumstance of the presence of more than one capable engraver present in the Revere workshop in the summer of 1776 offers the possibility that the dies for the three coins in the Massachusetts copper series were cut by more than one individual.<sup>64</sup>

On June 13, 1776, Revere's son John was born, this child died just two weeks later on June 27, 1776. Revere's next child, Joseph Warren was born April 30, 1777. These events place Revere at his home and workshop for at least some duration of time during the months of June, July, and/or August 1776. By November 1776, Revere was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel of Artillery and stationed

62. Martello, p. 47. "Revere's output resulted from a well-managed group effort. As with all craftsmen, he received assistance from numerous apprentices throughout his silver-working career, although his surviving recordbooks rarely identify these helpers or their activities. If Revere followed standard practices, a shop of his size would have a reasonable number of assistant silversmiths and regular turnover among them."

63. [www.americansilversmiths.org/makers/silversmiths/102117.htm](http://www.americansilversmiths.org/makers/silversmiths/102117.htm). "He worked circa 1771–1821 as an engraver in Boston MA. Originally as a journeyman in the shop of Paul Revere." See also: [www.masshist.org/object-of-the-month/objects/the-columbia-and-washington-medal-2004-05-01](http://www.masshist.org/object-of-the-month/objects/the-columbia-and-washington-medal-2004-05-01). "After apprenticing under Paul Revere, Callender went into business for himself in Boston as an engraver."

64. Q. David Bowers believes that the pine tree and the seated figure were engraved by an experienced hand and the lettering, which he feels is very amateurish and also different from the other two coppers, was done by someone else. Via email to the author, April 4, 2019.

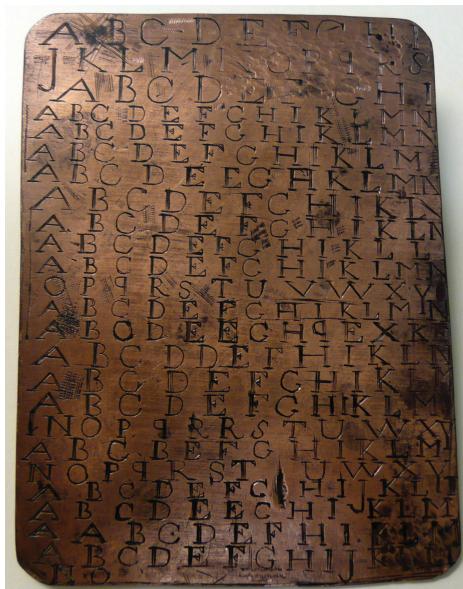


Figure 35. Engraved copper plate attributed to Paul Revere. Courtesy of the Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society. This is just one of many examples of Revere's engravings which are held by the Society. Pieces such as this have been analyzed by Bentley in order to reach the conclusion that Revere engraved the dies of the 1776 Massachusetts Copper coinage. [Printing plate for Revere bookplate] [artifact] Reverse [Boston, 177-?] Special Colls. Graphics—Revere 1 printing plate: copper; 9.8 x 7.2 cm. Note: Per Anne E. Bentley this engraving is on the reverse of the bookplate Revere engraved for his father.

at Castle William (Castle Island) in Boston Harbor. A posting which certainly permitted him sufficient opportunity to monitor his silversmith shop.

Since the first documentation of the 1776 Massachusetts copper coinage Paul Revere has been linked as a possible engraver of the dies used to strike the coins. Breen states that "Detailed comparisons of lettering peculiarities with those of both Paul Revere's 1775-76 currency and his securities plates show enough resemblances to assign all of these to him."<sup>65</sup> Anne E. Bentley, curator of art and artifacts at the Massachusetts Historical Society, has also identified Revere as the engraver of these pieces based on extensive examination of the plates and engravings within the Society's collection (Fig. 35).<sup>66</sup> It is not the objective

65. Breen, p. 59.

66. Anne E. Bentley, [Study of the 1776 Massachusetts copper penny, part of:] *Witness to America's Past: Two Centuries of Collecting by the Massachusetts Historical Society*. Boston, MA (Massachusetts Historical Society, 1991). See also Massachusetts Historical Society,

of this paper to endorse Paul Revere as the engraver of these pieces; however, his workshop should remain a top contender for this attribution.

Examples of Revere's engraved lettering show a similarity to the legends of the 1776 Massachusetts coppers and there is an established use by Revere of the employed symbolism. In addition, Revere's shop was operational during the summer of 1776 when other artisans in Boston were still recovering from the destruction caused by British occupation during the nearly year-long occupation of Boston by British forces. We now also know that Revere potentially had access to an "Engine for Coining" located in Boston. The die failure apparent in the strike of the Pine Tree copper also seems to support Breen's and Bentley's contention that it is a result of Revere's inexperience as a die sinker,<sup>67</sup> as well as the possibility that the screw press used to strike these coins was old and well-used in 1776 when these coins were struck. Moreover, the possibility of poor die steel available during the war should be considered as a reason for the apparent die failure.

#### THE GROCER, EDWARD HOOPER, AND JEREMIAH COLBURN

The final section of this paper will discuss the known and documented provenance of the Pine Tree Copper. In Crosby's *The Early Coins of America* the entry for the Pine Tree copper details the following history:

This probably unique piece now in the collection of William S. Appleton, was formerly owned by Mr. J. Colburn, of Boston who obtained it about 1852, from Mr. Edward W. Hooper, then a school-boy collector of coins. Mr. Hooper purchased it from a grocer at the northerly part of the city, who found it many years before while excavating on his premises, in the vicinity of Hull, or Charter Street, for the purpose of making an addition to his dwelling. He had long preserved it as a curiosity.<sup>68</sup>

The identity of the North End "grocer" is puzzling and may never be determined with certainty. A possible candidate is Thomas Pratt Pulsifer who was a long-time resident of the North End neighborhood.<sup>69</sup> He is listed in the 1852

Collections Online, Massachusetts Pine Tree Penny. "Paul Revere Strikes Again." [www.masshist.org/database/593](http://www.masshist.org/database/593).

67. Ibid.

68. Crosby, p. 304.

69. Pulsifer died in 1875 as a result of a "murderous assault by two roughs at the North End." "Mr. Pulsifer was widely known and greatly respected as a provision dealer of strict

Boston City Directory with a house on 5 Hull Street and a provisions shop on 152 Salem Street. Thomas Pulsifer lived at 1 or 5 Hull Street from 1840–1852. Pulsifer's provisions market was located two blocks down Salem Street from his residence. Thomas Pulsifer's dwelling address at 1 or 5 Hull Street was located at the corner of Hull and Salem Streets directly across Salem Street from the Old North Church (Christ Church), where Paul Revere received the signal that started his famous ride. In 1776 the property directly behind the 1–5 Hull Street location was the home and grounds of Josiah Snelling, a Boston Tea Party participant and prominent baker. Per *Bakers and Baking in Massachusetts* (1909):

Josiah Snelling lived in a large house in Salem Street, next to the Governor Phipps estate, it had a garden and orchard extending back to the burial ground, and the building was for years known as the old Snelling House. He was offered large sums of money by the British if he would furnish them with bread, but the sturdy patriot refused and subsequently had to give up his house and with his family leave town during the occupation. His son Colonel Josiah Snelling, Jr. was born in the old mansion....<sup>70</sup>

As Colonel Josiah Snelling, Jr. was born in 1782 it can be assumed that Josiah Snelling returned to his home on Salem Street in 1776 when the siege ended. Based on the condition of the Pine Tree copper it is probable the "grocer" did not find the coin buried in the earth but in a shed or outbuilding that was demolished or repurposed as an addition to his home. A view of the area with homes and outbuildings is shown on (Fig. 36) which is an excerpt from *Clough's Atlas 1798 Property Owners of the Town of Boston*. As can be seen on this map

honesty in his transactions with the public. His family were residents of the North End a quarter of a century ago, and it is stated that in early life he was a milk carrier, and that there are many now living who can recall distinctly to mind the appearance of Mr. Pulsifer as he came to their parents' doors daily with his cans of milk, which he brought from East Boston. At that time there were but two houses on the island, and cows pastured at the end of Webster street, where there was then a fort. Mr. Pulsifer has been a member of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery for nearly twenty-five years. He was a member of the old City Guard, of which his brother, David Pulsifer, of South Market street, was first lieutenant for many years, serving under Captain Newell A. Thompson, John C. Park and other commanders." *Salem Register*, November 18, 1875. Note: Thomas Pulsifer's son Edward King Pulsifer was born in 1837 and died of typhus in 1849 at the age of 12 years old, New England Historic Genealogical Society; Boston, Massachusetts; Massachusetts Vital Records, 1840–1911. Pulsifer's only other son died in infancy.

<sup>70</sup> Arthur W. Brayley, *Bakers and Baking in Massachusetts* (Boston: The Master Bakers Association) 1909, p. 113.

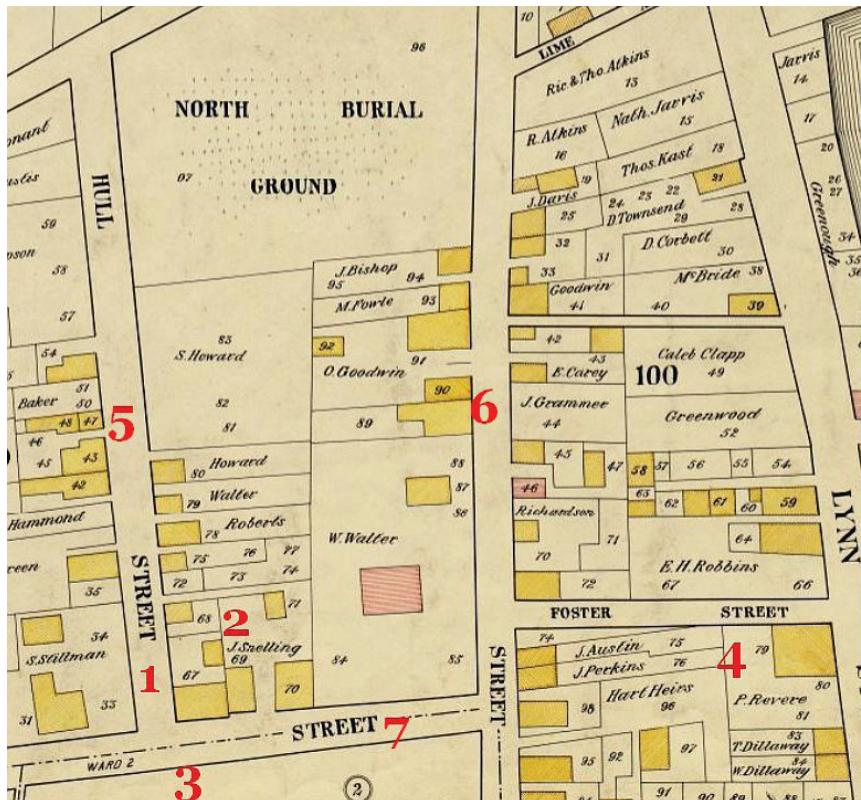


Figure 36. Online Massachusetts Maps. Clough's Atlases of Property Owners of Boston in 1798. Clough's atlas 1798: property owners of the town of Boston. Northern part of the North End (Ward 1), manuscript map by Samuel Chester Clough, ca. 1900? From the Samuel Chester Clough research materials towards a topographical history of Boston. Ms. N-2160, 101 x 67 cm. Courtesy of the Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Key numbers added by author: 1 = 1–5 Hull Street (later the location of Thomas Pulsifer residence); 2 = Josiah Snelling home; 3 = Location of Old North Church (building not shown on map); 4 = Paul Revere's Bell Foundry, est. ca. 1787; 5 = Hull Street; 6 = Charter Street; 7 = Salem Street.



Figure 37. Jeremiah Colburn was one of nine nummatists depicted on the Numismatic Gallery series of medalets issued by Augustus B. Sage in 1859. Courtesy of Q. David Bowers.

{FOR THE COURIER.]

**Our Copper Coin.**

*To the author of the article in the Courier entitled "The Red Cent."*

UNITED STATES APPRAISERS' OFFICE,  
Port of Boston, Mass., June 1, 1857.

Sir: In the article on American coins, I find described two copper coins of "1776". I wish to know if any coins of these types are known to you. For some years the larger coin has been in my collection. I never yet met with a collector that had ever heard of any other, nor have I ever known of but one of the other type, which is in the collection of a friend.

In the Boston *Evening Gazette*, of August 23, 1856, I published an article on "Early American Coins," in which I described the above coins. I am very desirous to learn if there are others of the kind extant, or was the description taken from the article alluded to? I think the coins unique, and shall esteem it a favor to receive an answer in relation to the matter. It is my intention to republish the article from the *Gazette*, adding to it others I have met with since writing it. I should be pleased to make an exchange with you for any duplicates you may have of the "half cent of 1776, U. S. A.," the "cent of 1781, I cut my way, &c." the "cent of 1787, Immunis Columbia," the "New York cent, 1785, of an Indian."

I have a collection of "Continental paper money," of which I have some duplicates of Massachusetts, Maryland, &c., which I will exchange for bills of the Southern States.

I am, very respectfully, yours,

JERE'H. COLBURN.

Figure 38. *Charleston Courier*, June 6, 1857.

the “North Burial Ground” (i.e., Copp’s Hill Burying Ground) covers a significant portion of the block between Hull and Charter Streets. As a consequence, a limited number of properties fit the description for the location of the dwelling of the “grocer.”

In 1852 Edward W. Hooper (1839–1901) would have been 12 or 13 years old. Hooper later graduated from Harvard College (1859) and Harvard Law School (1861). During the Civil War he distinguished himself as an *aide-de-camp* to Union Generals Rufus Saxton and John Adams Dix and military governor in the South Carolina Sea Islands. Later in life he served as treasurer of Harvard College. Born into an illustrious Boston family,<sup>71</sup> his mother was the Transcendental poet Ellen Sturgis Hooper<sup>72</sup> and his father Robert William Hooper was a physician. In 1852, the Hooper family lived at 44 Summer Street in Boston. Edward W. Hooper does not appear to have any connection to numismatics beyond his brief ownership of the Pine Tree Copper while he was a boy.

In 1852 Jeremiah Colburn, the reputable Boston collector and numismatist, resided at the Winthrop House,<sup>73</sup> a hotel and boarding house located a few blocks from the Hooper home. Colburn at that time owned a hat store at 60 Washington Street<sup>74</sup> that he purchased from Seth J. Thomas in 1840. By 1853 Colburn had been appointed one of the United States appraisers of the port of Boston. In June, 1857 Jeremiah Colburn (Fig. 37) wrote the following letter to the *Charleston Courier* (Fig. 38).

[FOR THE COURIER]

Our Copper Coin.

To the author of the article in the Courier entitled “The Red Cent.”

UNITED STATES APPRAISERS’ OFFICE. Port of Boston Mass.,

June 1, 1857.

Sir: In the article on American coins, I find described two copper coins of “1776”. I wish to know if any coins of these types are known to you. For some years the larger coin has been in my collection. I never

71. Edward W. Hooper’s sister Marian “Clover” Hooper Adams (1843–1885) was a socialite married to historian Henry Adams. Upon her death Henry Adams commissioned sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens and architect Stanford White to create the Adams Memorial at her grave in Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, D.C.

72. Ellen Sturgis Hooper died of tuberculosis in 1848.

73. *Boston City Directory*, 1852. The Winthrop House was located at the corner of Tremont and Boylston Streets.

74. Bostonian Society, *Catalogue of the Colburn Collection of Portraits and Autographs* (Bostonian Society 1901), p. 123. Note: The building at 60 Washington Street was at the corner of Friend Street.

yet met with a collector that had ever heard of any other, nor have I ever known of but one of the other type, which is in the collection of a friend.

In the Boston Evening Gazette, of August 23, 1856, I published an article on "Early American Coins," in which I described the above coins. I am very desirous to learn if there are others of the kind extant or was the description taken from the article alluded to? I think the coins unique, and shall esteem it a favor to receive an answer in relation to the matter. It is my intention to republish the article from the Gazette, adding to it others I have met with since writing it. I should be pleased to make an exchange with you for any duplicates you may have of the "half cent of 1776, U.S.A.," the "cent of 1781, I cut my way, &c." the "cent of 1787, *Immunis Columbia*," the "New York cent, 1785, of an Indian."

I have a collection of "Continental paper money," of which I have some duplicates of Massachusetts, Maryland, &c., which I will exchange for bills of Southern States.

I am, very respectfully yours,

J E R E ' H .

COLBURN.

The "larger coin" "in my collection" described by Colburn is the Pine Tree copper (Fig. 1). The coin in the "collection of a friend" is the Janus copper (Fig. 3), which at that time was owned by Matthew Stickney of Salem, Massachusetts. The Janus copper is first documented in Stickney's collection in 1854.<sup>75</sup> The related Indian copper (Fig. 2) was not discovered until around 1911 when it was first published by Howland Wood<sup>76</sup> and consequently this coin is not mentioned in Colburn's article.

Jeremiah Colburn presumably did "republish the article from the *Gazette*" in the October 1857 edition of the *Historical Magazine*. His description of the Pine Tree and Janus Coppers is as follows:

There is in the collection of the writer, a copper coin believed to be unique, of nearly the size of the half dollar. Obverse: MASSACHUSETTS STATE, with a pine tree in the centre of the coin. Reverse, LIBERTY AND VIRTUE, 1776, a female seated on a globe holding in her

75. Stone, p. 80. Letter of Charles Ira Bushnell to Matthew Stickney.

76. *The Numismatist*, June 1911, p. 228.

right hand an olive leaf, in her left a staff. Of this date there is also a copper coin the size of a half cent, having on one side a Janus head, and on the reverse: GODDESS OF LIBERTY, 1776. The die for this and the preceding coin, is believed to have been cut by that well known patriot of the Revolution, Col. Paul Revere, who was by trade a goldsmith and engraver.<sup>77</sup>

As can be seen by the preceding, Colburn evidently believed the Pine Tree and Janus coppers to be legitimate and struck contemporaneously to their 1776 dates. This is important as it was just a year prior in 1856, that Thomas Wyatt's "Chelsea Hoard" of struck forgeries and fantasies of Massachusetts silver pieces became known to numismatists. David Fanning describes Colburn's principal position in the detection of Wyatt's fraud:

Wyatt's copies did not remain undetected for long. Boston numismatist Jeremiah Colburn led the charge against Wyatt in August 1856, publishing excerpts from his correspondence with him and noting that soon after the "discovery" of the so-called hoard, "complete sets of this coinage poured into our city. 'N.E.' shillings and sixpence, before so rare, together with some other pieces never before seen, were to be found exposed for sale in this city ... all these pieces are counterfeit, and made by a man in New York city, who represents them to be originals."<sup>78</sup>

Thomas Wyatt has been offered as a possible source of the 1776 Massachusetts copper coinage by those who believe the coins to be nineteenth-century fantasies.<sup>79</sup> It is abundantly clear, however, that Jeremiah Colburn, the first numismatist owner of the Pine Tree copper was distinctly aware of Thomas Wyatt's proclivity for fraud. Colburn would not have promoted the Pine Tree copper in his writing if he had any suspicion that the coin was intertwined with Thomas Wyatt's forgeries.

If the documented provenance of the Pine Tree copper is accurate, and there really is no reason to doubt it being so, there is no apparent motive to link the

77. *The Historical Magazine and Notes and Queries Concerning the Antiquities, History and Biography of America*, October, 1857, p. 298.

78. David F. Fanning, "Off the Shelf: Thomas Wyatt and the Birth of Numismatic Fraud in the United States," *The Asylum*, Winter 2016, p. 31. See also see n. 7: "Originally published under the pen-name 'Nummus' in the *Boston Transcript* for August, 19, 1856. Later published in the *American Journal of Numismatics*, Vol. VII, No. 1 (July, 1872), pp. 4-5 under the heading 'Counterfeit 'N.E.' and Pine Tree Money,'" p. 34.

79. Stone, p. 80.

production of the coin with a nineteenth-century forger. Edward W. Hooper, a boy from a prosperous family with little apparent interest in numismatics received the coin from a “grocer.” Hooper soon sold the coin to Jeremiah Colburn, an ethical numismatist who lived in his neighborhood. Colburn spent years attempting to determine the coin’s history and discover other examples in the series before he sold the coin to W. Elliot Woodward of Roxbury, Massachusetts, sometime around 1860.<sup>80</sup> Woodward sold the Pine Tree copper at auction in 1863<sup>81</sup> where it was purchased by William Sumner Appleton who studied the coin for the rest of his life. In 1905 the Pine Tree copper was given by the Appleton estate to the Massachusetts Historical Society. It should also be noted that the Janus copper, which was discovered by Matthew Stickney, remained in the Stickney estate after his death in 1894. The Janus copper was sold by Henry Chapman as part of the Stickney Collection in 1907. The Indian copper was acquired from Howland Wood by the American Numismatic Society in 1917<sup>82</sup> where it resides to this day.

The known provenances of all three pieces of Massachusetts copper coinage indicate that they originated from three different sources and presumably for not great expense. The “grocer” gave or sold the Pine Tree copper to a boy with no history as a collector. Matthew Stickney allegedly purchased the Janus

80. The Massachusetts Historical Society website indicates that John K. Curtis sold the Pine Tree Copper at a lottery sale in 1861. This appears to be an erroneous interpretation of the described “unique Massachusetts Copper Coin” in the Curtis sale. That coin was apparently a 1652-dated Thomas Wyatt fabrication. John K. Curtis never owned the Pine Tree Copper. See: John K. Curtis, *A Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Gold, Silver, and Copper Coins & Medals of All Nations*, 1862, p. 21. “Unique Massachusetts Copper, Pine Tree. ‘In Massathvsets,’ rev. ‘1652, XII, New Engl, An. Do.”

81. *Coins and Medals From the American Portion of the Collections of Henry M. Brooks Esq., Jeremiah Colburn Esq., Rev. J.M. Finotti, Dr. Edward M. Field and Dr. Augustine Shurtleff. The Property of W Elliot Woodward of Roxbury, Mass., Sold at Auction by Messrs Bangs Merwin & Co., 1863, Lot 1947.* Woodward deemed the Pine Tree Copper “the most interesting and valuable coin that he has ever offered for public competition.”

82. Wood apparently bought back or cancelled the sale of the Indian copper from when it sold in 1914. “*Catalogue of the Magnificent Collection of American Colonial Coins, Historical and National Medals, United States Coins, U.S. Fractional Currency, Canadian Coins and Medals, etc. formed by the late Hon. George M. Parsons, Columbus, Ohio / catalogued by Henry Chapman*,” 1914, Lot 98: “NOTE - This coin was discovered by Mr. Howland Wood, and first brought to the public notice in *The Numismatist*, June 1911, page 228, where it is pictured, and is not part of the Parsons Collection. While the property of Mr. Wood, he has placed no limit upon it, and orders it sold to the highest bidder.” Per *The Numismatist*, March, 1916, p 107, “It is so poorly minted and being holed that at the Parsons’ sale it only brought \$37.”

copper in a group with other pieces<sup>83</sup> that were ostensibly more valuable than the Janus copper at the time. Howland Wood later achieved lasting numismatic acclaim with his research into Canadian blacksmith tokens.<sup>84</sup> Based on the timing of his documentation of the Indian copper there is an implication that it was discovered while Wood was searching for the blacksmiths that were the basis for his groundbreaking article. It should be emphasized as well that Wood's discovery of the Indian copper was made nearly 60 years after the documentation of the Pine Tree and Janus coppers. It is illogical that a nineteenth-century coiner with intent to deceive would invest the time and expense to design and engrave three different dies and strike each individual coin with no prospect of realizing monetary profit for his efforts.

#### CONCLUSION

In September 1776 the ship *William*, sailed from Boston, Massachusetts to England. Prior to this, one of the *William*'s passengers witnessed "copper tokens" in circulation in Boston. This event was reported to the British newspapers in November 1776. The "copper tokens" of the passenger's description match the elements of the three unique coins of the 1776 Massachusetts copper series. This contemporary evidence establishes the existence of the 1776 Massachusetts copper coinage to the year these pieces are dated. Ancillary evidence reinforces this conclusion: the coins employ appropriate legends and symbolism for the time, an "Engine for Coining" existed in Boston to strike the coins, and an operational workshop with skilled engravers was present in Boston in the summer of 1776. Furthermore, the documented provenances of the three coins do not suggest any rationale to diminish this determination.

It is the hope of the author that those readers who believed it "impossible" for the Pine Tree copper to have been struck in Boston in 1776 will now concede it is plausible. From our twenty-first century perspective it is effortless to underrate the capabilities of the citizens of Boston returning to a city ravaged by British occupation. How was it not "impossible" for Henry Knox,<sup>85</sup> a Boston

83. Crosby, p. 304. "The only specimen known of this curious pattern is in the collection of Matthew A. Stickney, Esq., and was found with an engraved piece (see plate VII, No. 9,) and some proof impressions from plates for continental paper money engraved by Paul Revere....".

84. Howland Wood, "The Canadian Blacksmith Coppers," *The Numismatist*, Vol. XXIII, April 1910, pp. 97-106.

85. Henry Knox, (born July 25, 1750, Boston, Massachusetts [U.S.]—died October 25, 1806, Thomaston, Maine, U.S.), American general in the American Revolution (1775-83) and first secretary of war under the U.S. Constitution. Forced by family circumstances to leave school at age nine, Knox worked in a Boston bookstore and by age 21 had acquired his own store. He became active in the colonial militia and in 1775 joined the Continental Army at Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was commissioned a colonel and placed in charge

bookseller just two years prior, to command a wintertime “noble train of artillery” and complete “one of the most stupendous feats of logistics”<sup>86</sup> to move 60 tons of cannon from Fort Ticonderoga over the Hudson River and across the Berkshire Mountains 300 miles to Boston in order to force the end of the siege in March 1776? How was it not “impossible” for the American army from the vantage of Dorchester Heights to witness before their eyes the ships of the greatest navy in the world evacuating the soldiers of the greatest army in the world from the city of Boston? It is people of this same caliber who returned to Boston to restore their city and continued to accomplish such “impossible” feats. That a small number of “miserably executed” “copper tokens” were struck in Boston in 1776 is not only possible, it is eminently probable.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my very great appreciation to Christopher McDowell for his guidance and encouragement, without which this paper would not have been possible. I would also like to acknowledge the courtesy of Dave Bowers, Anne Bentley, and the Massachusetts Historical Society. Additionally, I would like to thank the members and guests of the editorial committee for their assistance in improving this article.

of the artillery. During the winter of 1775–76 General George Washington sent him to Fort Ticonderoga, in New York, to bring back captured British artillery there. In a remarkable feat, Knox brought back artillery totaling 120,000 pounds (55,000 kg), using oxen, horses, and men to transport the guns over snow and ice 300 miles (480 km) to Boston. The weapons were used to drive the British from that besieged city and formed the basis for the Revolutionary artillery. In the Philadelphia campaign (1778), Knox, then a brigadier general, distinguished himself in commanding the artillery at Monmouth, New Jersey (June), and later at the decisive Siege of Yorktown (1781). He was made a major general and at the end of the war succeeded Washington as commander of the army (December 1783). Knox resigned his command early in 1784 and returned to Boston. He became secretary of war (1785) in the government under the Articles of Confederation and was carried over into President Washington’s first cabinet (1789). He retired to a large estate at Thomaston, Maine, in 1795. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. [www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-Knox](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-Knox).

86. Victor Brooks, *The Boston Campaign: April 1775–March 1776* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1999), p. 210.

## APPENDIX

ORDER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL TO THE BOSTON COMMITTEE OF SAFETY REGARDING THE SHIP *WILLIAM*<sup>87</sup>

In Council [Watertown] Sepr 26, 1776—

Ordered That the Committee of Safety Inspection &c of the Town of Boston, be, & they hereby are Directed to Deliver to Mr William Ross owner of the ship *William* (Lately the *Creighton*) the sails, or any other Articles now in their Possession belonging to said ship, And the said Committee are further Directed, Carefully to Inspect the said ship, & to take Care that no one Person takes Passage in the said ship but such as have a Certificate in Writing under the hand of the Secretary of this State or his Deputy Certifying that Liberty has been Granted to them for that Purpose.<sup>88</sup> And the said Committee are also Directed to see that no other[s] but such as Produce a Certificate as aforesaid take passage in said Vessel, And the Committee are Directed to Permitt Mr Ross to take onboard as Provision for the Voyage Such Articles named in a Bill of Stores this Day Deliver'd Mr Ross signed by the Secretary, which has been alo[w]ed by this Board—& the Committee are also Directed to Return a List of the names of the Persons who shall actually Sail in the said ship to this Board as soon as may be.<sup>89</sup>

LIST OF PERSONS PERMITTED TO SAIL IN THE SHIP *William* FOR ENGLAND<sup>90</sup>

[September 26]

Willm Ross & Wife 3 Children & 3 Servts.

Nathl Morgan dead

Paxton Hatch

~~Hugh Munro & Servts & Black Woman & Boy~~

George Campbell & a Black Boy

John Barslet & White Boy & Girl

John Grant & White Serv [t]

William Jones

Wm Pringle

James Dillon

87. Mass., Arch., vol. 165, p. 278.

88. See following entries.

89. To sail for England.

90. Mass., Arch., vol. 165, p. 111.

Willm Le[s]ly Wife & 2 Children  
Joseph Dowse  
Thos Cragg & Servt  
Walter Logan Wife & Son  
Ann [illegible]  
George Keys  
Mainsweet Walrond & Servt  
Philip Hicks & Servt  
Charles Grant & Servt  
Eliz[a] Fenton w[th] her 3 Children & one Servt  
Willm Williams a free Negro  
Patrick Power  
Willm Barret a free Negro  
Capt Lionel Bradstreet  
George Ashburne  
John Frazier  
Willm Jenkins w[th] his Servt Boy  
Robert Browne  
John Moon  
John Stalker  
Peter Gourlay  
Adam High  
Thos Lemon  
Wm Pascall  
John Brown  
John Emmes  
J.B. Barnard  
Danl Donovan & Servt  
Mark Sedden & Servt  
George Bates  
Hugh Walker  
Arc[h] Bog  
Robt Park  
Charles Reid  
Alexr Trough  
Thos Mahoney<sup>91</sup>

91. *Ibid.*, pp. 282-83, 288, 297, additional names were added to the passenger list this date: James Hodges, William Emle, James McGill, Alexander Lidell and Thomas Cromarty. And, on September 27, Jonathan Dudfield and "a Young Son with him about six Years old & a Black Boy" were granted permission to leave.

STORES PERMITTED BY THE MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL ON  
BOARD THE SHIP *WILLIAM*<sup>92</sup>

In Councill [Watertown] Sept 26, 1776 —

Ordered that Mr Ross be Permitted to take onboard the ship *William* the Articles hereafter named as Provisions for the Voyage.

4 Tr[ce]s & 4 blls Salt Beeff  
 2 blls Pork & 1 bll Pease  
 1 bll Herrings & 1 do Meal  
 2000 lb Bread 3 firkins of Butter & 2 Boxes Candles  
 20 Sheep 30 young Sho[a]ts, 12 dozn fowls, 3 dozn Geese & 100 lb fish  
 100 lb Coffee 6 lb Tea 200 lb Sugar 12 Cheeses & 12 Hams  
 1 hhd Madeira & 1 hhd Porter in bottles, 40 Galls Rum 6 Casks Cyder  
 2 Cases Gin—100 lb Spare Rope  
 A few Vegetables of difft kinds  
 50,000 Galls Water  
 Hay & Corn for the live Stock  
 2 Chaldron Coals & fire wood—

PETITION OF A STEERAGE PASSENGER IN THE BRITISH PRIZE SHIP  
*Anna Maria*  
 TO THE MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL<sup>93</sup>

The Humble petition of William Pascall, steerage Passenger, On Board The Ship *Anna Maria* William Pringle - Commander from Barbadoes, - Bound for London and taken by the Privateer sloop *Revenge*, of Salem, Joseph White Commander. Sheweth, That whereas, I hear of a Ship in Boston Harbour, purchased by Mesrs Ross and Morgan of said Boston, with intent of carrying Passengers to London. - I humbly crave the favour, your Honours will, of your goodness, grant me the Liberty to return in said Ship to London, my native place; as I have a tender Mother a Widow; and two Children younger than my self, whose whole dependance (under God) is on my Labour, and industry, for their support. - I complain not (May it please your Honours) of any ill treatment since my being made a Captive, but on the contrary declare, and will at all times declare, my being exceedingly well used. - But my money being on the decline; and a long,

92. Mass. Arch., vol. 165, 110.

93. Mass. Arch., vol. 165, 259.

and (in all probability) tedious Winter approaching, is the sole cause of this my earnest prayer. I Beg therefore your consideration of my Case, and that this my request and prayer may be granted. - And your Petitioner as in duty bound shall ever pray. -

William Pascall  
Salem 18th Septr 1776.

[Endorsed] In Council [Watertown] Septr 24, 1776 Liberty is hereby granted to the within named William Pascall to depart this State in the Ship *Creighton* (Benjn Moore Master) lately prchased by Mr Ross for the purpose of transporting himself & others to Great Brittain - <sup>94</sup>

Jn<sup>o</sup> Avery Dpy Secy

SUMMARIES OF A FEW OF THE INDIVIDUALS PERMITTED TO  
SAIL IN THE SHIP *WILLIAM*

**William Ross** with his wife, three children, and three servants. This is likely the wealthy planter of St. Mary, Jamaica. Per the University College London, Legacies of Slave Ownership website the Will of William Ross was Proved at London March 24, 1801, by John Elmslie.<sup>95</sup>

Spouse: Johanna Elizabeth  
Children: Elizabeth, Mary Murray, Helen, Agnes  
Will  
PROB 11/1355/237 - precis.  
William Ross of St Mary, Jamaica.

To my beloved wife £1,500 sterling to be paid to her in 12 months after my deceased. Also to her all my household furniture, plate, carriages and horses (except my riding horse) and the free and full use of my dwelling house on Richmond plantation in St Mary and all the out offices thereto belonging with all such of my Negro slaves as at the time of my death shall have been employed as house negroes about the same (not exceeding 10 in number) together with as many plantains ground provisions and corn rum and sugar to be supplied and

94. Other crew members and passengers from various prizes were granted permission to depart on board the *Creighton*.

95. University College London, Legacies of British Slave-ownership. [www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146646313](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146646313).

delivered to my wife from all or any of my properties as she shall reasonably require for the use and support of her house servants, horses and stock. This not to bar her from her life rights of dower of an in my real estate.

To my brother Robert Ross Esquire £500 sterling.

To my son-in-law Oliver Hering Esquire £500.

To my friend James Lewis junior my riding horse.

My executors to take possession of my plantations, lands, slaves, stock and Appurtenances belonging to my plantations and lands and to manage them to the benefit and advantage of my daughters and residuary devisees during the lifetime of my wife and that they from time to time pay over the remaining yearly proceeds after deducting the proportion my wife shall be entitled to on account of her dower or thirds therein to my daughters Agnes Ross, Mary the wife of Oliver Hering and Helen Ross: in equal shares between Agnes and Helen but as I have already settled upon Mary £500 currency per annum that sum should be deducted out of the proportion she would have been entitled to.

On the decease of my wife, my executors should sell all my plantations and other estate for the benefit of my daughters equally share and share alike including the £500 already settled on Mary. Should Oliver Hering not accept this settlement then £7,000 currency to be deducted from the total and shared equally between Agnes and Helen.

My wife Elizabeth Ross and my brothers Lieut. Col. Alexander Ross, Robert Ross and John Ross, my friends John Elmslie of Great Britain, John Rodon and James Lewis junior and my son-in-law Oliver Hering to be executors and guardians.

Signed 21/02/1794.

**Paxton Hatch** is likely the same individual who was listed as a student at the University of Pennsylvania in 1775.<sup>96</sup> His father, Nathaniel Hatch, was a “firm Loyalist,”<sup>97</sup> a graduate of Harvard College, and Clerk of the Courts. Nathaniel Hatch “went to Halifax with the British Troops” in 1776. Nathaniel Hatch’s “large and valuable estate” was later confiscated and bought by Captain James Swan.<sup>98</sup>

The entry from Jones<sup>99</sup> reads as follows:

96. *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 16, 1892, p. 253.

97. James Henry Stark, *The Loyalists of Massachusetts and the Other Side of the American Revolution* (Boston: W. B. Clarke, 1910), p. 430.

98. *Ibid.*

99. Alfred E. Jones, *The Loyalists of Massachusetts: Their Memorials, Petitions and Claims* (London: The Saint Catherine Press, 1930), p. 163.

## PAXTON HATCH

Son of Nathaniel Hatch (*q.v.*), was sent to Philadelphia College for his education in 1772, and was there at the outbreak of the war. He was frequently urged to join the American army, and with most of his companions in the College was promised promotion. For his refusal to forsake his loyalty he suffered great reproaches, and insults, and his supplies and the common necessities of life were cut off. At length, and with much difficulty, he obtained leave to go to Boston, and thence to England. He was granted a pension of £80. (A.O. 13/46; A.O. 12/105, f. 116.)

According to the College records he entered in May, 1775, and was of the class of 1780.

**William Lesly, Wife & 2 Children** is possibly the same as the William Lesly / Lesley who married Rebecca Brown in Boston on December 7, 1767.<sup>100</sup> Nothing further is known of this couple. The marriage was officiated by "Rev. Andrew Eliot." Andrew Elliot was minister of the New North Church and notably held an interest in numismatics, per *The E-Sylum*: Vol. 3, No. 38, September 17, 2000, Article 9:

## ANDREW ELLIOT, EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY COIN MAVEN

Andrew Pollock reported the following on the C4 (Colonial Coin Collector's Club mailing list): "I stumbled across the following paragraph in Sibley's Harvard Graduates, Volume X, under the biographical sketch of Andrew Eliot (Class of 1737):

Eliot [third minister of the New North Church of Boston] was sincerely interested in history. He rescued old coins from silversmiths and sent them to the collectors among his English friends. He remarked that pine-tree shillings of several dies were still common, but that he had only seen one New England sixpence in his life.

The date of his numismatic interest is not mentioned but his death is said to have occurred in 1778.

Shipton, Clifford K. "Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College in the Classes 1736-1740, with

100. *Documents of the City of Boston*, vol. 4, Issues 101-60, Boston (Mass.) City Council, 1903, p. 53.

Bibliographical and Other Notes." Volume X. Boston, Mass. Massachusetts Historical Society. 1958."

Your Editor's web search for Andrew Eliot turned up a reference to the E-Sylum archive, where Eliot was mentioned in the Vol 1, No 5. issue (October 14, 1998). Joel Orosz had mentioned Eliot at a talk to the Chicago Coin Club.

After forwarding Pollack's information to Joel, he replied: "I've never written anything about Elliot, only spoke about him, as you note, to the Chicago Coin Club. It was Eric Newman who first discovered that Elliot was a coin collector. He wrote about Rev. Elliot in "The Secret of the Good Samaritan Shilling", if memory serves. This is a great find on Pollock's part - it adds an important fact to our knowledge about 18th century U.S. numismatics- that the NE Sixpence was exceedingly rare even then. Elliot did die in 1778. Thanks for sending Andy my way - this is great stuff!"

Wayne Homren, Editor

**Joseph Dowse:** note however that a newspaper report in *The Caledonian Mercury*, November 13, 1776, lists instead one "Jonathan Dowse, from Salem" on A list of passengers onboard the ship *William*, Benjamin Moor, master, which has not yet appeared, which sailed from Boston, Sept. 28, 1776, for Great Britain. Jonathan Dowse b. 1739 was the son of Joseph Dowse who was "auditor of Boston, 1759, and in 1760 was named surveyor and searcher of customs at Salem, where he was a substantial merchant."<sup>101</sup> On August 14, 1776, Jonathan Dowse "who lately held a Petit Office in the Customs" had already engaged a passage another ship to which was destined to France.<sup>102</sup> He had expressed his intention to go from there to England. However, the Committee of Correspondence of the Town of Salem believed him "too liable to suspicion as Unfriendly to America to be permitted to take Passage in said Brig."<sup>103</sup>

**Walter Logan**, with his wife and son, is likely the same person as "Walter Logan, of Boston and Needham, formerly Comptroller of Customs at Perth Amboy. He was banished in 1776."<sup>104</sup> His wife was the former Mehetabel Minot.

101. National Archives, Founders Online, To Benjamin Franklin from Joseph Dowse, 27 July 1747. [founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-03-02-0071](http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-03-02-0071).

102. *Naval Documents of The American Revolution*, Vol. 6, Part 2 of 8, 1972, Electronically published by American Naval Records Society, Bolton Landing, New York 2012, p. 178.

103. Ibid.

104. Joseph Grafton Minot, *A Genealogical Record of the Minot Family in America and England* (Boston: Privately Printed, 1897), p. 21.

The entry from Jones<sup>105</sup> reads as follows:

WALTER LOGAN

In 1766 he was Comptroller of Customs at Perth Amboy, New Jersey, having gone from Roxbury, Massachusetts. His wife and family were banished from Roxbury on account of their loyalty and went to Needham, Massachusetts, where they left furniture in the houses of Eleaser Fuller and the Rev. Samuel West, who appear to have sheltered them. This Scotsman was the agent for the property of Governor Bernard (*q.v.*) in Massachusetts. He had shares in townships Nos. 2 and 5 in Penobscot Bay (A.O. 13/51). He settled in Scotland and was allowed £45 from his claim of £210, and at the rate of £80 for the loss of his official income during the war. His pension was £40. (A.O. 12/109.) Margaret, his wife, died in Edinburgh, October 13, 1841 (*Gent. Mag.*)

**Mainsweet Walrond** is likely Main Swete Walrond (1725–1790), “5th Marques de Vallado” of the island of Antigua.<sup>106</sup> Main Swete Walrond married Sarah Lyons in 1748. The Lyons family is a noble Anglo-Saxon line, one branch of which monopolized the Government of Antigua during the 18th century.<sup>107</sup> Sarah (Sarah Lyons Walrond Flucker Beaumez), a daughter of Main Swete Walrond and Sarah Lyons, married (1782) Captain Thomas Flucker, Jr. of the British Army, and a graduate of Harvard College (1773). Captain Flucker’s father was Thomas Flucker (1719–1783), a Loyalist former Secretary of the Province of Massachusetts, who evacuated to Nova Scotia and was listed within the Massachusetts Banishment Act of 1778. Another of Thomas Flucker’s children was Lucy Flucker, the wife of the famed patriot General Henry Knox of the American army. The marriage of Lucy Flucker to the bookseller Henry Knox in 1774 had been strongly opposed by her family. After the marriage Thomas Flucker secured Henry Knox a captain’s commission in the British army which Knox refused.<sup>108</sup> After the Revolution Henry Knox would assist Sarah Lyons Walrond Flucker Beaumez in her claims (for her Flucker children) to the “Waldo Patent” in Maine.<sup>109</sup> Through the published letters of Henry Knox, Lucy Flucker Knox,

105. Jones, p. 198.

106. Marquis de Vallado is a Spanish title bestowed upon Humphrey Walrond on August 5, 1653, by King Philip IV of Spain.

107. Oliver Langford Vere, *History of the Island of Antigua*, Vol. 2 (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1894), pp. 214–17.

108. Mark Puls, *Henry Knox: Visionary General of the American Revolution* (St. Martin’s Press, 2008), p. 18.

109. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, Our Collection, Feb. 12, 1784, Knox, Henry (1750–1806), Autograph Letter Signed, Title: to Sarah Lyons Flucker. [www.gilderlehrman.org/collection](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/collection).

and Sarah Lyons Walrond Flucker Beaumez, there is established a close and caring relationship. Sarah Lyons Walrond Beaumez refers to Lucy Flucker Knox as “sister” and thanks Henry Knox for his “friendship.”<sup>110</sup>

**Elizabeth Fenton** “with her 3 Children & one Servant” is likely the former Elizabeth Temple, wife of Colonel John Fenton. Per the *National Archives* “Founders Online”:

John Fenton (d. 1785), an active and outspoken New Hampshire Loyalist, was seized by a Patriot mob in Portsmouth, N.H., on 13 June 1775. The colony’s provincial congress declared on 29 June “that Colo John Fenton is not a friend to this country” and two days later sent him to the headquarters of the New Hampshire forces at Medford, Mass. (Bouton, N.H. Provincial Papers, 7:543–44). An Irishman, Fenton served as a captain in the British army during the French and Indian War. He married an American, and when his regiment was reduced at the end of the war, he left the army and settled in Massachusetts. In 1771 Fenton moved to New Hampshire, where he had been given a large grant of land. By allying himself closely with the colony’s royal governor, John Wentworth, he soon became a prominent political figure, holding among other offices a colonelcy in the New Hampshire militia and the clerkship of Grafton County. GW responded to Fenton’s plea for protection from his New Hampshire enemies by sending him to Hartford as a prisoner on parole. On 19 Sept. the Continental Congress directed GW to release Fenton “on his giving his parole of honour to proceed to New York, and from thence to Great Britain or Ireland, and not to take up arms against the good people of this Continent” (JCC, 2:255). See also Hancock to GW, 26 Sept. 1775. Fenton sailed to England soon afterwards and never returned to America.<sup>111</sup>

**J.B. Barnard** is likely John Beardwell Barnard, “an early purchaser of land in Tobago,” and “merchant of Rotherhithe.”<sup>112</sup>

<sup>110.</sup> Ibid., Dec. 1, 1788, Beaumez, Sarah Lyons Flucker (FL 1784–1801), Autograph Letter Signed, Title: [to Lucy Flucker Knox], June 10, 1792, Beaumez, Sarah Lyons Flucker, Autograph Letter Signed, Title: to Henry Knox. [www.gilderlehrman.org/collection](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/collection).

<sup>111.</sup> National Archives, Founders Online, To George Washington from John Fenton, 6 July 1775. [founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-01-02-0036](http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-01-02-0036).

<sup>112.</sup> University College London, Legacies of British Slave-ownership. [www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146632827](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146632827).

John Beardwell Barnard successfully petitioned the Council of Massachusetts to release him to go to England in September 1776 after he had been seized aboard the *Pecary*, a prize ship sailing from Tobago to London, where he said he had a wife and three children. John Beardwell Barnard of Ipswich Suffolk mariner had posted a bond for his marriage to Esther Clarke of St Saviour Southwark on July 24, 1755.



## Point/Counterpoint: John Kleeberg's Continental Dollar

JEFF ROCK (SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA)<sup>1</sup>

It was with great interest that I read John Kleeberg's "The Continental Dollar: British Medals or American Coins" in the last issue of the *Journal of Early American Numismatics*. Kleeberg is a gifted writer and an excellent researcher, and I was expecting his article to convince me of whatever his findings were by the time I reached the end. Unfortunately, such was not the case, and I found myself in disagreement far more than agreement with many of the points raised, a feeling that seems to have been felt by other readers as well—though I suspect that if a vote were to be taken it would be roughly akin to national politics today, with people split roughly down the middle. I should mention at the onset that I have no horse in this race—while I sporadically deal in colonial coins and have sold a couple lower grade examples of the Continental Dollar in the distant past, I do not own one today either as a dealer or a collector, and I have no vested financial interest in whether these coins are American products from 1776 or slightly later medals from England or Europe. My interest, like Kleeberg's, is purely academic.

1. The author wishes to thank Chris McDowell for numerous readings of this in draft form, and Erik Goldstein and Ray Williams who read and critiqued the work when it was nearly done; their insight tightened up some arguments and offered other avenues of exploration. As always, any errors in this article are the author's own.

Instead of writing a traditional article it seems the easiest way is to discuss the points that I disagreed with by page number, instead of starting with a brief quote from that page—this will allow readers to look at the entire statement that Kleeberg made and insures that nothing is taken out of context. For the sake of continuity, I will continue to call these “Continental Dollars,” even though the vast majority could never have been meant to be dollar coins and they may not have been made in or used on the North American continent.

**Page 160:** Introductory text: there are several medals in the Betts-listed series that have decorated edges—and quite a few eighteenth-century token issues have edges with decorations or lettering; the argument that no one would go to the extra bother of putting a security edge on something that wasn’t a coin thus falls flat. Die axis does not really argue for either coin or medal status. There are medals that are coin turn and coins that are medal turn, and the fact that there are still other rotations found on the relatively small number of Continental Dollars coined simply means that the dies were not firmly locked in the press or that the minters just did not care.<sup>2</sup> This actually argues *against* these being a coin to my mind, as one would expect a much higher level of quality control if they were coins minted for circulation rather than medals. Both English and Spanish coins were usually struck with strict die alignment—the English ones were usually coin turn while the Spanish ones were medal turn (indeed that is a quick way to identify some counterfeit Spanish silver coinage—if anything in the eighteenth century is struck coin turn it is likely a counterfeit made either in America or in the Birmingham counterfeit mints). It seems unlikely that a coinage—either by Congress or by a speculator—would be so sloppy in this regard, especially with a relatively small mintage (we are not talking millions of state coppers here), and especially so if that mint went to the trouble of putting a security edge on a coin. A stronger argument could be made if, say, all the brass pieces were a different alignment than the pewter ones, which could be suggestive of a pattern issue versus something struck for general circulation, but that is not the case here.

2. Most references do not actually describe die rotation for medals, and such is the case of the Betts work. However, an examination of the Betts 552 examples offered in the John Ford collection (Stack’s May, 2006) are instructive: Lot 457 is clearly in coin turn (as can be seen by the position of the mount), while the following lot, also with a mount, is clearly in medal turn. Chris McDowell informed me that Betts 521 comes coin turn. Neil Musante graciously looked through his inventory of Betts-listed medals and found examples of Betts 406, 409 and 564 all in coin turn; other varieties certainly exist in coin turn and it is clear that there was no hard and fast rule that a medal needed to be in “medal turn.” For coins that come in medal turn, the obvious examples are the Spanish coinage of the eighteenth century: see Chester L. Krause, Clifford Mishler, and Colin Bruce II, *Standard Catalogue of World Coins Spain, Portugal and the New World*, Krause Publications, 2002, p. 21.

**Page 161:** Counterfeit Spanish Eight Reales. I have seen very few counterfeits of Spanish Milled Eight Reales of the Pillar type, and these are much rarer than the bust types—but the majority of the ones seen were not in pewter, but in lead.<sup>3</sup> It appears in this paragraph that Kleeberg confuses or conflates the Pillar pieces with the later Bust issues when he says that others are known in brass and copper. The Bust types are often found in those metals, but those were struck later than the dates he quotes for the notices he cites on this page. Indeed, many of the counterfeit Bust style Eight Reales were backdated—very few were likely struck before 1776, and there is no indication that any of the brass or copper ones were made that early, or that ones in those metals were made in America.<sup>4</sup> It is likely that the counterfeit Pillar style Eight Reales in circulation in colonial North America would have been cast in lead, something that could be done easily without much in the way of specialized equipment—fire to melt the lead, fine sand to make a casting mold, and some basic tools that would be found in nearly every home at the time. Given the overall rarity of counterfeit Pillar style Eight Reales, and the fact that most are in lead and not pewter seems to disprove Kleeberg's assertion—they were made in lead because that was easier to cast and had the added bonus that lead also gave the right sort of silvery color and weight to the piece, whereas struck copper or brass specimens would just look wrong (and if silvered, as Kleeberg mentions, when the silvering wore off a lead piece it would still have a greyish hue underneath whereas brass or copper would obviously be a different color and immediately peg such a coin as a counterfeit).

**Pages 162–63:** Colonial minting technology and milled edges. There is *no* colonial coin or token *made in America* that had a milled edge, and there is no evidence that anyone in America actually had machinery capable of doing this, especially as early as 1776. This is the major hurdle, and nothing Kleeberg puts forth clears it. Yes, counterfeiters could copy a coin that was in front of them, and that often included counterfeiting an edge, as was done with counterfeit

3. Robert Gurney, *Counterfeit Portrait Eight-Reales: The Un-real Reales*, Swamperbob Associates, 2014, p. 55 notes the “surviving contemporary circulating counterfeits of the pillar variety were viewed by the authors as being too few in number to be a significant group in terms of this study. In addition, those that the authors were aware of were also subject to dispute about their actual age.”

4. Gurney lists just 11 varieties of the Bust type counterfeits dated prior to 1776 (not including a handful of error dates like 0781 where the engraver simply cut the numbers in the wrong order and here likely meant 1780). In that small group the few listed as brass or copper alloy were all made later than the dates they bear, some having Sheffield style silver plating that points to their manufacture in England and probably post-1790, the coins backdated as was a common practice with other counterfeits of the era. See pp. 242–47 for a listing of the pre-1776 dated varieties.

Spanish silver coins. This was not difficult with a soft metal like lead where the edge device could be added by hand *after* a coin was struck or cast (which would only require a single punch or a gang punch of a segment of the edge device); the soft metal would not need much force to impart an edge design, and lightly tapping it in would not cause much distortion to the obverse or reverse rims. A milled edge could also be applied to a blank planchet, if the piece was struck in a press without a collar—this is the way most eighteenth century British tokens with decorated edges were made.<sup>5</sup> The technology of the time would not have allowed any American coiner to apply the decorated edge done during the striking process, as this would have required a segmented collar (this would also apply to British counterfeiters and token makers of the time until the later Soho Mint issues, which harnessed the power of a steam engine to accomplish the task). In his book on the counterfeit Spanish Bust style Eight Reales, some of which were likely made in America, Robert Gurney goes into the various edges extensively, illustrating those done with single punches and those with larger gang punches.<sup>6</sup> Kleeberg ignores Gurney's findings completely.

However, there is a single coinage type that Kleeberg fails to mention that sheds some light on the matter at hand: the 1688 American Plantation Token. These were of very low value, roughly equal to a British farthing, the smallest coin in circulation at the time (though denominated as 1/24 of a Spanish silver Real, which would be by far the smallest denomination Spanish coin, too—192 tokens would be needed to equate a single Eight Reales coin). What is interesting here is that the Plantation Tokens have a security device on the edge—and they were made of tin. The only problem is that despite all these similarities with the pewter Continental Dollars, these were not made in America, but in England, for use in America (even though few actually reached our shores). So, we have an established precedent for England making something in tin, of low value, with a security edge—showing that they had the equipment and experience to strike such a thing. On the other hand, no coin was struck in colonial America in tin, and no coin was ever struck with a security edge.

Kleeberg also assumes that the words “milled” or “milling” in the statements he reproduces refer *only* to tools or equipment that would impart an edge design on a coin, since that is what America numismatists today think when they hear those words. But milling refers, broadly, to any cutting of metal, and could equally apply to other things, including tools to cut dies (which milled steel from the face of the die while engraving the design) or even in making planchets (cut-

5. The edge lettering process is described in Jon Lusk, *British and Irish Tradesmen and their Copper Tokens, 1797–1804*, Digital Dynamics, 2014, p. xvi.

6. Gurney, *op. cit.*

ting them from sheets of metal).<sup>7</sup> Milling tools could also be used to remove the port and smooth out the edges of cast coins, and is an equally valid (and more probable) reading of the term as used in the passages Kleeberg quotes—especially since it is used along with the word “moulds”, which implies something cast, not something struck by dies. In British numismatics the term “milled coinage” is used to describe everything that was produced after the era of hammered coinage (saved for cast coins) and the term “milling equipment” could just as easily apply to something as simple as a screw press—implying that the coins were made with some use of machinery, not made by the brute force of striking them with a hammer, individually and by hand.<sup>8</sup> One needs to remember that contemporary accounts of property seized in the homes and shops of counterfeiters were not written by numismatists, but rather by the eighteenth century equivalent of a policeman who was not likely to know the exact names for tools and equipment when preparing a report—so what information has filtered down to us today needs to be read with an eye towards what was likely meant, and not taken literally.

Kleeberg claims that there is “ample evidence that edge mills were in use in America before 1777,” but the evidence provided consists of vague accounts that do not positively equate the use of the word “milling” to what we think it means today. His claim that the presence of decorated edges on many counterfeit Spanish Eight Reales proves that milling machines were available in America before 1777 is incorrect: 1) many of the counterfeit Eight Reales were edged by hand using single or small gang punches, as shown in the Gurney book<sup>9</sup>, 2) while some were made using milling machines, it cannot be assumed that these coins were automatically made in America—these were being counterfeited in England, especially in Birmingham, and since many of those mints are known to have actually had the equipment needed to do edge designs for the tokens they were making, the coins Kleeberg describes could have just as easily been made there,<sup>10</sup> and 3) the date on a counterfeit coin has nothing to do with when it was made; Kleeberg picks the 1777 date because that is what is needed to give

7. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word milling when used as an adjective as “(of a machine) designed to cut or shape metal using a rotating tool.”

8. Geoffrey Cope and Alan Rayner, *The Standard Catalogue of English Milled Coinage, in Silver, Copper and Bronze, 1662–1972*, Spink and Son, 1975.

9. Gurney, *op. cit.*, pp. 72–87.

10. H. E. Manville, *Tokens of the Industrial Revolution: Foreign Silver Coins Countermarked for use in Great Britain, c.1787–1828*, Spink Publications, 2001, p. 199 notes “Numismatists are familiar with Birmingham as the source of many of the brass counterfeit Spanish dollars” and the Gurney reference on p. 116 notes that for the counterfeit Eight Reales “one of the most likely candidates for the European production is England and Birmingham in particular.”

the Continental Dollars a chance of being made in America—but even if there are counterfeit Eight Reales dated 1774, 1775, and 1776 that have milled edges it does not mean those were the dates they were made. Counterfeit Eight Reales were struck well into the nineteenth (and some into the twentieth) century and backdated.<sup>11</sup> Using the date on any counterfeit coin as proof of something is not persuasive—not only were some backdated, others were accidentally dated well into the future, as counterfeit halfpence of George III dated 1966 and 1969 are known, as is a counterfeit Irish “Conder” token dated 1972 (each of these involving punches used upside down and/or numerals transposed when being punched into the dies).<sup>12</sup> When read with a view to what was available at the time in America, there is nothing to suggest the presence of the equipment needed to impart edge designs on Continental Dollars in 1776—this does not mean it could not have been invented, but Kleeberg’s claim of “ample evidence” is not supported by the evidence at hand.

Next, a countermark does not give the age of the coin it was struck upon. Just because we know a certain countermark had to have been done post-1797 it does not imply that the host coin was made anywhere near that date. The coin could have been 100 years old when it was countermarked; this is well known in French coinage used in North America where coins that were sometimes over 200 years old were countermarked and put into service in 1640.<sup>13</sup> If Kleeberg meant that the hoard he describes contained struck counterfeits where the “countermark” was actually engraved into the die itself, that would be different, as those are known to be post-1797 products—but he does not state this, nor does he illustrate any specimen that could lead one to figure this out. To confuse matters even more, the coins Kleeberg mentions that are cited in the Portable Antiquities Scheme are not actually called counterfeit there—they may well be legitimate Spanish Eight Reales struck years or decades earlier and then counterstamped with the oval bust of King George III. This does nothing to support Kleeberg’s claims. He states that though these coins—real or counterfeit—were found in England and Ireland, this somehow proves that the same technology was “widely used in America to produce counterfeits of Spanish milled dollars.”

11. Gurney, *op. cit.*, pg. 118–27 describes counterfeit Eight Reales dated in the early 1800s that were made as late as the 1920s–1930s and used in trade with China. These counterfeits were of good weight and fineness and were not made to deceive collectors, but rather to take advantage of the premium that China placed on silver coinage, and especially for these specific issues that they referred to as “Buddha Dollars.”

12. For the Irish pieces dated 1969 see Jeff Rock, “Non-Regal Dated Irish Halfpence: A Survey of Known Dates and Varieties,” in *The Colonial Newsletter*, Dec. 2011, pp. 3771–72. The 1972-dated Irish Provincial token is listed as D&H Dublin 200.

13. Robert A. Vlack, *An Illustrated Catalogue of the French Billon Coinage in the Americas*, The Colonial Coin Collectors Club, 2004, pp. 8–11.

This proves no such thing: it shows that the technology was available in England and nothing more. Kleeberg cites five cases of counterfeiters caught making Spanish Eight Reales in America in this period where the records actually say something about the edges of the coins, and extrapolates from this small number that counterfeiting with edges was rampant—yet of the five only one actually specifically mentions the edge design, the other four just use the word “milled,” which as shown does not necessarily mean what Kleeberg claims. The one example that does mention the edge design says it is “true,” but makes no comment on how that edge was applied—it could have been carefully punched in by hand; this does not prove the presence of any sort of edging machine. The very lack of contemporary evidence about American abilities to make counterfeits with edge designs actually undercuts Kleeberg’s argument.

**Pages 164–68:** This section, along with the historical documents reprinted in the appendices, were the best parts of Kleeberg’s research, and a useful summation of data that is widely dispersed and not easily located by collectors. I disagree with none of the findings in this section, but would add that church bells were likely taken not because of the value of the metal they contained but out of fear for their safety as they were expensive to make. The colonists could have also feared that the metal would be turned into weaponry like cannons that could then be used against Continental forces (this is far more likely to have happened than Kleeberg lets on since, for instance, the majority of the congregation of Trinity Church in New York City were Loyalists); this was documented in the case of the Liberty Bell, which was taken from Philadelphia and hidden in Allentown, Pennsylvania in 1777, specifically to prevent it (and a few other bells) from being melted and turned into weapons.<sup>14</sup> In regards to the analysis of the silver content of the Continental Dollars struck over earlier Spanish Eight Reales, some of the mints that struck this denomination in Latin America were known to have used a slightly lesser alloy—perhaps pocketing the difference, though at great risk to the mint director’s necks if caught. At the time of issue it would be difficult to discern a difference of 4% fineness, and even if it could be determined it would likely make no difference to American colonists who would have been glad to have ANY silver coin in circulation.

<sup>14</sup> Gary B. Nash, *Liberty Bell*. Yale University Press, 2010, p. 19. Erik Goldstein disagrees with this motive, and correctly notes that England “had an endless supply of brass and iron cannon streaming out of their foundry at Woolwich, and the naval power to convey them anywhere on the planet they needed them” (personal communication, April 4, 2019). While this is undoubtedly true, it does not mean that the colonists would have known this, and they may have still feared that their bells of peace could turn into weapons of war.

**Pages 168–69:** Cast or not? The problem with using the jumbo flan piece to make a pronouncement on ALL Continental Dollars is that it is a sample size of one. While I did not spend any time examining this specimen, its unusual planchet could be evidence of an error strike of some sort or a well-made counterfeit. Even if it is an absolutely genuine piece made in the manner Kleeberg described, this does not necessarily mean that all Continental dollars were made in the exact same way—a single outlier could have been a test piece that tried a different method for planchet preparation, a method that was discarded as being too labor intensive. The brass Continental Dollars that I have examined over the years have shown no outward signs of being struck on cast planchets and, indeed, have appeared to be struck on normal planchets cut from sheets; I have not searched these out and made any sort of detailed study, but most experts that I have talked to have seen nothing that screams “cast” about these coins—and indeed, if they were on cast planchets of some sort then it would be much more difficult to discern between struck originals and later well-made cast counterfeits. Pewter, of course, is a much softer metal and if those planchets started off as cast planchets the tell-tale signs would likely be erased upon striking. But the fact that it is a soft metal cuts both ways since it would be easy to cut planchets out of strips of pewter, and if the brass planchets were not cast it indicates that a planchet cutter was on hand, as well as the necessary rolling equipment needed to get the sheet of metal to the desired thickness. If that machinery was in place then going to the extra time and effort of casting a large number of pewter planchets is not as likely—though it must be noted that large numbers of military buttons made of pewter were made by casting. This requires further study, and Kleeberg is to be credited for focusing attention on the topic; the more we learn about the coins we collect, the less we realize we actually know.

Kleeberg errs by saying that the cutting-out process would somehow harden the metal and thus create more wear on the dies when the coins were struck—metal is hardened by uniform pressure when dies hit both sides of a coin with sufficient force, but a planchet cutting machine is akin to a cookie cutter—it shears a circular piece from a large flat sheet (of dough or metal, the concept is the same). Since nothing is pressing down on the metal face of either side of a planchet being cut from a sheet, no hardening occurs. Kleeberg notes that most Continental Dollars are “extraordinarily close” in size (save for the jumbo flan piece) and ascribes this to meticulous filing of each and every planchet to the very same diameter—a task that would be so time consuming and exacting that it would likely not be possible. The far easier answer is that the planchets are uniform because they were made with a cutting press. One only has to look at the Massachusetts silver coins (especially the large planchet Pine Tree shillings) to

see what cutting planchets by hand looks like—even pieces that were completely unclipped are in varying size and shape, and few are anywhere near perfectly round, and that was for a much thinner planchet than the Continental Dollars. Now imagine doing that by hand for a much larger pewter planchet.

Kleeberg claims that because clipping was known on gold coins that were then regulated by Ephraim Brasher and others that this somehow proves that clipping was a potential problem for the Continental Dollar pieces and this explains the extraordinary measures that the coiners took to prevent this from happening. But there is a world of difference here—the coins Brasher regulated were gold, and of high value, and they circulated based on the belief they were of the value of the gold they contained—the regulators mark could be taken that the value was accurate and thus the coin did not need to be weighed and examined at every transaction. But the Continental Dollars were pewter, which is not a precious metal. The Continental Dollar, if it was actually intended to be a circulating coin of the dollar value, would have been a fiat coinage. As such, it would not matter if it was clipped. If the pewter coin was meant to circulate at something nearer the penny value then clipping off a small amount would be a waste of time and energy since the value of a few grains of tin was practically nil. Since the effect of clipping would be absolutely meaningless on a pewter coin then why would any coiner go to such time-consuming and costly lengths to prevent it? The answer is that they did not—the planchets were cut by machine not cast and then trimmed by hand, the edges were not laboriously filed down, and the edge device (whether imparted prior to, during or after the striking process) was more ornamental than functional. One could argue that the edge device would be important on a large-scale silver coinage, and that is true—but the four examples of silver Continental Dollars known today are all struck over Spanish Eight Reales coins that already had a similar edge device on the host coin's edge prior to overstriking. If a large-scale silver production was planned using Eight Reales as host coins then the original edge could be kept, saving a labor-intensive step. If the minters sought to make their own silver planchets then such an edge would be needed—but only for a precious metal coin, not for a base metal issue like pewter.

Kleeberg further notes that "this labor-intensive process would make no sense in technically advanced, industrialized Britain; it did, however make sense in America." If he is suggesting that the coins were actually made in 1776 then this statement does not stand up—while the Industrial Revolution had started in England some 15 years earlier, there was no major progress made in the field of coining until James Watts' steam engines were yoked to Matthew Boulton's coinage presses around 1790—until then coins in England were made the same

as they had been for centuries, on a screw press. Since there was nothing of this type being done in America at the time, then this process not only did not make sense, it was not in existence.

**Page 171:** While it is true that the Continental Dollar dies often contain legend errors, they are far from ineptly made as Kleeberg claims. The designs are well-done and the lettering is better-formed than on other things we know that were cut by hand, like the Massachusetts silver pieces of the previous century or the Higley coppers. The die work was certainly not up to the standards of the Royal Mint—but no one claiming a European origin for these coins has ever stated that as their place of origin. Kleeberg claims that, “the inept preparation would be unlikely in sophisticated Britain, which had, if anything (given the vast number of counterfeit halfpence) far too many skilled diesinkers.” In this sentence Kleeberg twists a major argument against his claim and tries to turn it into proof supporting his views. Anyone who has examined those counterfeit halfpence (and this writer has thousands in his collection and has studied the series closely) knows that an exceedingly small percentage were actually made by “skilled diesinkers.” The majority of pieces were struck on poor planchets with badly made dies, often with recutting, legend errors, damage and reworking—the exact things that Kleeberg says prove the Continental Dollars could not have been made in England. If British diesinkers could make those errors in halfpenny and farthing dies, they could certainly make them on larger coins. The field of counterfeit halfpence collectors once believed in the equation “Crude = American,” and often paid strong money for such pieces based on this theory. Unfortunately, that was quickly proven wrong as more and more crude pieces came out of England—where they were made and where they had stayed for over two centuries. There were poor engravers and die sinkers, faulty minting equipment and indifferent workers on both sides of the Atlantic, and lack of skill tells us nothing about the geography of where a coin was struck. Kleeberg also seems to think that these same counterfeit British halfpence were mostly struck in or near the dates they bear because he brought them in to buttress his argument; however most were made later—AFTER the 1776 date that he claims for the Continental Dollar (while some counterfeits were certainly made prior to this date they tended to be casts, with struck pieces reaching their apogee in the 1790s). This fact also weakens Kleeberg’s argument, since the supposedly skilled British engravers that he claims could not have produced such shoddy work as the Continental Dollars would not actually have been around plying that trade in 1776—two decades later, maybe but not in the period Kleeberg calls for.

**Page 173:** The decorated edges were, in England, added to a blank planchet *before* it was struck, not after—this prevented damage to a coin or token by trying to punch in an edge device by hand or putting it into some sort of milling machine. Milling machines did exist at this time: a blank planchet was inserted into the machine, a worker rotated a handle that turned gears which imparted the device or lettering onto the edge planchet. The force exerted by the machine to push this edge lettering into the blank would mean that the metal displaced would have to move somewhere, and it would likely do so laterally, slightly pushing up and down the edge of the planchet along the rims. This displacement would not matter on a blank because those slightly raised areas would be flattened out as the planchet was later struck by dies. An edge device added *after* striking would be a different story—first, it would be more difficult to do since the planchet would have been hardened by the striking process and second, it would also show the displaced metal since the coin had already been struck and there would be no force applied to it again to flatten that area out—while it would wear down with circulation a good number of the Continental Dollars have no wear, and yet show no trace of this metal displacement (or any attempt to remove it after the coin was struck, such as filing them down).

Kleeberg believes that these coins were made in America using technology that existed in England—and that somehow America acquired this technology, despite being colonies that were not allowed to do much of their own manufacturing. But for some reason the idea of an edging machine was never shared with these same colonists, because it was never used on any coinage of the period. To be fair, some of the contemporary Spanish Eight Reales that have an edge device were likely made in North America, but there is no way to prove which were made in America and which were made in England or elsewhere. Since one cannot say where these coins were made their existence does not prove the technology was in use when and where Kleeberg claims it to be. As detailed above, the edge device was also often added by hand either with single or small group punches; many of these are illustrated in the Gurney book—which did not need any sort of milling machine.<sup>15</sup> Incomplete milling, as described by Kleeberg, exists in a number of British-made products of the time, and this was due to either simple slippage of the planchet in the milling machine, or because the person turning the handle of the machine stopping before the entire edge was applied.<sup>16</sup>

15. Gurney, *op cit.*, pp. 72–87.

16. An example of the 1791 Washington Liverpool Halfpenny (properly an eighteenth Century British Provincial Token, listed as D&H Lancashire 116) is cited in Walter Breen's *Complete Encyclopedia of U.S. and Colonial Coins*, under his number 1223 as having "half of edge device inverted." Other similar edging errors are listed in the Dalton & Hamer reference, as well as in numerous more modern auction catalogues containing tokens of this era, those of Dix, Noonan, Webb, and Baldwin's being particularly useful.

The presence of incomplete milling on a couple examples does not make them American products, nor does it prove that the milling was added post-strike—instead, since it is known to have occurred in British-made pieces (but never on anything made in America) it actually argues for the Continental Dollars being made in England.

Kleeberg's statement that Eric Newman was in error when he wrote that the edge device on the Continental Dollars was the same as on the Nova Constellatio patterns and a Getz Washington pattern is undoubtedly correct. They are of similar design to be sure, but the same design could be copied on either side of the Atlantic. From the Provincial Token series we know that the edge templates often slipped or broke, and were frequently replaced—these would be thin strips of metal with the lettering or device raised in order to implant an incuse image on the planchet's edge; this would put significant pressure on that strip, which the hand cranking of the milling machine would further add to.<sup>17</sup> It is unlikely that a single set of edging devices lasted through one of these coinages, and virtually impossible that they would remain intact for over 15 years to be used on two other coinages of completely different sizes.

In terms of grading, the slabbed results skew to higher states of preservation, with 88 of the 129 examples graded by PCGS being essentially Uncirculated (the AU grades likely not from actual wear as much as cabinet friction and storage problems over the course of 200+ years), and 74 of the 87 graded by NGC are also in essentially Uncirculated condition. Those in lower grades exhibit wear from circulation (as Kleeberg noted dealer Tony Terranova stating), but this does not prove or disprove anything. The Rhode Island ship medals, the Admiral Vernon medals, and some of the later George Washington issues started life as medals and many may have found their way into commerce, with actual wear and tear to the surfaces, not mishandling from poor storage. The Admiral Vernon medals of the smaller size may have circulated as halfpence, but the larger size was bigger than any base metal coin then in circulation in England. Some of the rare pewter Rhode Island ship medals are also found in worn grades—and are about the same size as the Continental Dollars. The problem is that we don't really know how or why these things received this wear. All Indian Peace Medals that were presented to native chiefs exhibit wear, though these clearly did not circulate as coins—but they are also clearly holed, and one can infer the reason for the wear was contact with skin and clothing, as well as environmental damage received while being worn. For the Continental Dollars and other issues mentioned above, it is not as clear. They could be the equivalent of pocket pieces

17. Many of the minor edge variations listed in Dalton & Hamer are likely the result of one section, usually just a word or two, breaking and being replaced with another.

(more accurately for the time would be pouches hanging from a belt or worn under clothing),<sup>18</sup> but things like a Washington Manly medal seem too large and heavy to be carried around for the length of time required to wear them down to the grades they are found in today. Circulation as coinage thus seems likely in at least some instances. The eighteenth-century Provincial Tokens were clearly not official, regal coins, but they were widely accepted in commerce because there was a need for small change; it is possible that the same is true for some of the heavily-worn medals which could have been pressed into service as coinage when there was a shortage of specie. Wear alone does not prove whether something was originally made as a coin or a medal—there are medals that only come worn, and coins that only come choice (think proof and mint sets); but if a large percentage of a given piece exhibits wear then it is worth considering the possibility that something could start life as a medal and turn into something the equivalent of a coin, simply by being spent and accepted in commerce.<sup>19</sup>

**Page 174:** The problem of misspellings. Kleeberg takes three misspellings and decides that this proves that the die engraver was someone who was not a native English speaker. Two of the misspellings are “CURENCY” and “CURRENCEY” instead of the correct “CURRENCY.” These misspellings only prove that whoever engraved those dies did not know how the word was supposed to be spelled, nothing more—and both could also be explained by the engraver (who was cutting letters by hand, not punching them into the die) simply forgetting where he was in the word—something that is known to have happened in many colonial American coinages as early as the Massachusetts silver issues, as well as in British coins (including some actually struck by the Royal Mint).<sup>20</sup> There also remains the problem of standardized spelling, which Kleeberg completely ignores. During much of the eighteenth century there was no standardized spelling in England, and the same individual might spell his own name several different ways—as was the case with Abel Buell in Connecticut who spelled his last name

18. A fascinating history of pockets and their changes over time, as well as what they may have contained can be found at: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/a/history-of-pockets/>.

19. Today these would more properly be considered tokens as they were not sanctioned or issued by any government. But the line between coin and token was less strictly drawn in England and the American colonies of the eighteenth century, when the bulk of coins not made of precious metal were either token issues or counterfeits. These pieces still circulated as coins, despite not being official issues.

20. The 1652 Pine Tree Shilling Noe-11 variety leaves the H out of the word “MASATHVSETS” that is normally found on the coinage—and that word itself is not spelled absolutely correctly, as “MASSATHVSETTS” would be expected. The Noe-12 Shilling spells that same word “MASASTHVSETS.”

both Buel and Buell.<sup>21</sup> This began to change in the latter half of the 1700s based on the publication of Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language*, which was first published in 1755—but old habits die hard, and someone in England who had learned to spell prior to that time would still be likely to occasionally slip and spell a word the way it sounded instead of the way the good Doctor decreed. This simple fact makes England a likelier place than the learned but somewhat convoluted discussion of various Romance languages that Kleeberg suggests. This is further reinforced by the third misspelling he uses—that of "YORKE." While noting that the word was used in a different and somewhat obscure form in some French school texts, Kleeberg looks to the nineteenth century to find actual examples of this usage, far later than the Continental Dollar dies were made. He then ignores the much larger usage of this spelling variant in England. From the "New Yorke in America" token which was likely a seventeenth-century Bristol piece that actually had nothing to do with America, to the various token issues of the Duke of Yorke—that spelling found on several evasion coppers struck in the late 1790s in England; likely from dies cut by someone who did speak English as their first language, not French. Kleeberg's example of the languages spoken in New York City is interesting but not relevant to the Continental Dollar.

**Pages 174–77:** The Treaty of Paris medals. This section is solid until the final paragraph when Kleeberg states that, "the handcut letters and the crudeness of the dies suggest that the Treaty of Paris 'Felicitas' medals were struck in America, and are another argument that the Continental dollars themselves were struck in America." The "Crude = American" fallacy has been effectively dismantled earlier in this article. As stated, there were bad engravers on both sides of the Atlantic, and one in England (or anywhere in Europe for that matter) could have just as easily been responsible for this piece. Kleeberg's reasoning seems to be that if the Treaty of Paris medals were made in America then the Continental Dollars must have been made here too, but there is no reason that both things needed to be made in the same country. If an engraver is copying a design he only needs a single example of the piece being copied—for instance, this author's article on the 1787 Auctori Plebis token shows that it was made in England, but copied from a Connecticut copper that was struck in America—had similarity of design been all that was looked at one could erroneously conclude that both

21. Christopher McDowell, *Abel Buell and the History of the Connecticut and Fugio Coinages*, C4 Publications, 2015, gives examples of this; most striking is Buell's post-coinage career as a sword-maker which carry the "Buel" spelling.

were struck in England.<sup>22</sup> Or America. While it would have been slightly easier being able to pluck a Continental piece out of circulation and using it as a model for the reverse of the medal, this does not mean that was the only way it could have happened. Trans-Atlantic passage meant that a Continental Dollar made in England could be transported to America in under two months—or vice-versa. It is also just as likely that both the Dollar and the medal were made in England—in fact this might be more likely since we know that a sizable number of the Dollar coins were actually in England at some point since a sizable quantity was being offered for sale to Miss Banks and other British collectors for the distressingly discounted price of sixpence per piece at some point prior to 1790 at the latest and 1783 at the earliest—or the same time that the Treaty of Paris medals were being made (Fig. 1). Kleeberg states the Treaty of Paris medals were struck in America, using a Continental Dollar as an actual model for the reverse since those coins “from 1783 onwards were no longer hermetically sealed off in New York City” yet later in the same paper (see p. 192 section, below) he claims that the Continental Dollars that were in New York under British control were taken by them as spoils of war when they evacuated the city. It seems that if this claim is correct, the engraving of the Treaty of Paris dies could have been done in England—and if the claim of the British troops leaving with the coins is incorrect, then it seriously weakens his later argument. We note that Betts specifically mentions that an example of this medal was in the collection of Dr. Charles Clay—of Manchester, England. While not definitive proof of where the medal was made, of course, it is suggestive that one ended up there, along with a large number of the Continental Dollars, and the possibility that all were made there cannot be discounted.<sup>23</sup>

**Pages 177–81:** The section on Elisha Gallaudet is well-written and the biographical details and supporting information are new and useful. Unfortunately, Kleeberg accepts Eric Newman's claim that Gallaudet was the engraver of the dies and that Newman's pronouncement settles the matter decisively. While Newman was a legendary researcher, he was also a human being—and that means he occasionally got things wrong or reached a conclusion that others could find sufficient reason to differ with. There is no attempt in this section to note that two letters are seldom enough to assign authorship—Newman settled on Gallaudet

22. Jeff Rock, “The Mysterious Auctori Plebis Token,” in *The Journal of Early American Numismatics*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2018, pp. 199–206.

23. C. Wylls Betts, *American Colonial History Illustrated by Contemporary Medals*, Scott Stamp & Coin, 1894, pp. 299–300. Dr. Clay also had other American and British medals in his collection, as well as an outstanding collection of American colonial coins which were sold at auction in December 1871 by William Strobridge.

because he had the right initials and was in more or less the right area for the coins to have been made in America. Newman did not believe England or Europe were possible locations for the minting of the Continental Dollar, and thus ignored engravers in other areas—some of whom surely shared the same initials.

**Pages 181–83:** Kleeberg effectively dismantles another of Newman's theories on why the \$1 denomination was omitted from the Continental Congress paper currency. This section is very sound.

**Pages 183–85:** Was Congress involved? Again, Kleeberg differs with Newman, and justifiably so. However, he ends this section with the questionable claim that, “certain patriotic parties stepped in and began to coin the Continental dollars, without Congress's sanction, perhaps anticipating that their actions would later be recognized and acknowledged by Congress.” Kleeberg rightly notes that Newman ignored the lack of mention of this coinage in any of the 14,000 or so pages of Continental Congress papers that were carefully preserved—a very telling omission. But then Kleeberg makes the same error by ignoring the fact that there was no mention in any of those same records about these “certain patriotic parties” that he needs to have existed in order to prop up his theory. He tries to obfuscate this by claiming that the fall of New York meant that these patriots just walked away from what must have been a sizeable investment—a building, press, dies, metal, planchet stock, edging mills, tools, workers. It would be far more likely that a failure of that magnitude would have caused them to petition Congress for some sort of relief for their patriotic efforts. Congress may have refused, of course, but it is hard to believe that the people responsible for the coinage would not have at least tried to recoup some of their loss—and if that happened there would have been a record of it. It is also highly unlikely that these same people would never mention the subject again—ever—in any sort of official document or publication, especially at the time when Congress was debating settling the debts of states and the currency they issued for the war cause. The lack of *any* mention of these coins in the Continental Congress papers seems to be some degree of proof that the Continental Dollars did not originate in America.

**Pages 185–87:** In this section Kleeberg gives many reasons why the Continental Dollar was not struck as a medal. While the reasons are numerous, the problem is that most have exceptions that often swallow the rule. Kleeberg earlier stated that the Treaty of Paris medal was made in America, not England. That is still debatable: a shared design does not imply that they were made in the

same country nor is crudeness of design proof of where something was made. Kleeberg ignores the possibility of a British or European origin for the Treaty of Paris medal. The Treaty of Paris medal looks like a Continental dollar on one side, was made of the same metal, has the same type of edge, and is very clearly a medal—if this was something made in England it would demolish the first handful of Kleeberg's rules. The rest of his statements seem to rely on a limited area for comparison, British medals of a certain type, specifically those described in the book he cites as *British Historical Medals*.<sup>24</sup> Kleeberg does not give the full title of the book which is *A Catalogue of British Historical Medals 1760–1960: Volume 1: the Accession of George III to the Death of William IV*, the title here showing why some of Kleeberg's rules need to be treated with caution. For instance, he states that, "British medals of the eighteenth century have human figures as major parts of their iconography; the Continental dollar has no human figures"—but the reference book he cites deals with medals struck for people, from royalty to those who performed great service to England, and thus those types of medals would nearly all feature human figures on them. These historical medals were usually done in large size—because they were made to impress; this book deals with those medals specifically and does not deal with the multitude of other medals of smaller size and of less imposing stature. Furthermore, if European medals of the era are also considered there are numerous medals found in multiple metals (including many of the ones Betts listed as being of American relevance),<sup>25</sup> there are many that come without human figures as the major part of their design, there are numerous medals of dollar size (and smaller), there are many that come in coin turn instead of medal turn, there are some struck from dies with misspelled words or from dies that have breaks, and as any collector of medals knows, there are many that come in worn conditions. The fact that nearly every one of Kleeberg's rules has exceptions means they cannot be used to conclusively prove the Continental Dollars were not intended to be medal, and while the Continental Dollar would certainly be an unusual design for a medal, it is not an impossibility.

**Pages 187–88:** In trying to reconcile his views with those of other writers, Kleeberg makes a few statements that contradict his earlier claims. In trying to locate some contemporary mention of these coins he says that a June/July, 1776

24. Laurence Brown, *A Catalogue of British Historical Medals 1760–1960: Volume 1: the Accession of George III to the Death of William IV*, Spink and Son Ltd, 1980.

25. Perhaps the most relevant example of an issue coming in different metals is the Washington Before Boston medal, which was struck in gold, silver and bronze (Betts 542); many others medals listed in Betts for the Revolutionary War section also come in two or more metals.

newspaper account refers to Continental Dollars, part of which reads “a new impression struck of Continental copper coin, of a large size, twelve of which is to pass for an eighth part of a dollar.” Doing the math means that one of these copper coins was to be 1/96 of a dollar, or basically a penny, though we still call them Continental Dollars. This statement called for copper, but the closest that exists with the Continental coins is brass. But if these were valued at just a penny then why go to the labor and expense of putting on the milled edge as an anti-counterfeiting device? No small coin struck in America went to this trouble and it was certainly not cost effective to do so—and only one small-value coin struck for America had this device, the American Plantation token which, of course, was struck in England. There are also only a handful of brass Continental Dollars known, not what one would expect for a small-denomination coin that was being publicized at the time of its manufacture.

Kleeberg says that the brass pieces were put into circulation and had their silvering worn off—yet the brass examples extant today show no trace of silvering, even on the highest-grade coins, and few of the brass pieces show appreciable wear, which suggest that those did not circulate and were, as others have proposed, pattern or trial strikes more than an intended coinage. Kleeberg is mistaken when he says that the silvering would wear off “after the coin changed hands only a few times.” Any silvered coin put into circulation would wear at the high points first, revealing the base metal beneath the silvering. Silvering is not something that drips off a coin after a few hands touch it, leaving no trace behind. Coins that were silvered and put into circulation still show ample traces of that original silvering even when well-worn, as seen on any circulated example of a silvered Pitt halfpenny or the multitude of counterfeit Spanish Eight Reales that were struck on silvered planchets where exceedingly worn silvered pieces still retain some trace of silvering. Strikingly, the most common of the Continental Dollar metals is completely ignored in the newspaper account Kleeberg cites—those in pewter. If copper/brass pieces were to be a penny and silver ones a dollar (equivalent to 8 Spanish Reales), then what denomination would a pewter coin be? No one would take it for a full dollar value if they had a choice between that and a silver coin at the same price, and there is no other denomination discussed. It seems far more likely that the newspaper snippet was one of many false accounts of coins that were going to be authorized and be of such good quality as to drive out all the low weight or counterfeit trash then in circulation. Colonial newspapers did not have fact-checking departments or ace reporters, they printed what they were told, and their success rate was probably closer to miss than to hit in terms of accuracy.

**Page 187:** On this and the previous pages Kleeberg tries to reconcile conflicting evidence and discuss contemporary valuations to prove that the Continental Dollars were coins. He states that silver Continental Dollars rose in price from 8 shillings to 12 shillings. While a 50% increase in precious metal value would not be unusual in times of war, it is surprising that Kleeberg makes this comment specifically about the SILVER Continental Dollars—of which only four specimens exist today. His comment makes it seem like there were a significant number in circulation, which simply could not have been the case given this level of survival. Even more surprising is that while Kleeberg says this silver coin jumped 50% in value the brass pieces jumped from a penny to 14 pence in the same period—a 1,300% increase for a metal that was intrinsically less valuable (especially in wartime) than silver. This is glossed over with the comment “this makes perfect sense,” but it actually does not.

**Page 188:** Odell's poem certainly seems at first glance to refer to Continental dollars based on the word Congress used in the line above, but Erik Goldstein and others have ably disputed this reading.<sup>26</sup> Kleeberg asserts that it must refer to the Continental Dollars and not counterfeit Spanish Eight Reales (which is what Goldstein suggests) because those were too prevalent. This is one reading—but there are other, equally valid possibilities too. To this author it seems that a poem that mentioned handfuls of worthless coins would want to use the most *obvious* example, something that a contemporary reader could understand—not something they would never have seen or handled, but something they may have had some experience with, such as getting a counterfeit Eight Reales in change that turned out not to be made of silver. If only a couple hundred, or even a couple thousand, pewter Continental dollars entered circulation that severely limits the number of readers who would have seen or handled one, whereas the number handling a counterfeit Eight Reales coin would be exponentially larger. Kleeberg also claims that a counterfeit Eight Reales would not fit as the intended “pewter dollars,” because the author of the poem was specifically mocking Congress and only the Continental Dollar has Congress's name on it—yet in the next sentence mentions the increasingly worthless Continental Currency—authorized by the Continental Congress. If the poem's author was making fun of something Congress had done, then surely he would have referred specifically to this paper currency which was in circulation *everywhere* and seen by all, instead of a coin that had limited usage and was seen by few. Goldstein's supposition that

26. Erik Goldstein and David McCarthy, “The Myth of the Continental Dollar,” *The Numismatist*, July 2018, p. 42.

“pewter dollars” is shorthand for all and sundry counterfeit Eight Reales makes more sense in this context.

**Page 192:** Kleeberg tries to explain how Continental Dollars could have been made in America but fallen into the hands of the British since clearly a large number ended up in England after the Revolution’s end, but prior to 1785–1790 when Sarah Sophia Banks purchased her example, along with the printed flyer. To do this Kleeberg puts the coins in New York City, which fell to the British in 1776. The British soldiers occupying the city apparently never noticed these coins, or did nothing with them for the entire time they occupied New York City. The coins were never mentioned in an official dispatch, certainly an unusual situation since one would expect the finding of a large amount of coins would be made known, especially in a strictly regimented and hierarchical system like the British Army. One would also expect an occupying force to make political capital out of any treasonous act by the enemy—and Americans usurping the King’s right of coinage would certainly fit that category. This is amply illustrated by the troubles that Lord Calvert faced when he made coins for his Maryland colony a century earlier; it is worth noting that no other colony attempted to issue its own coinage after this happened.<sup>27</sup> How could a British commander not gleefully write to his superiors about “Traitor Money fallen into our hands” and then quickly gotten them back home as spoils of war? After all, soldiers know that cities fall and then fall again in times of war, and that the American forces would surely mount an attack to recapture the prize of New York City. Instead they sat on them for at least half a decade, until the 1781–83 period when it came time for them to permanently leave—at which time they grabbed anything they could, including kegs of Continental Dollars, which had been sitting around, unspent or unnoticed. The other alternative, that the coins were seized by the British troops and not mentioned to their superiors (either in New York or back in England) is also not very likely here: had the coins been in their hands they would have been spent, not kept safely in kegs for at least a half decade—and if these were intended to circulate as dollars they would have been spent while they still had some value. By the time 1783 rolled around the value of Continental currency was close to worthless, and one cannot imagine British soldiers taking a heavy group of coins that had no real value (i.e., they were not made of silver), especially for coins that had lost any circulating value they might have once had.

27. Massachusetts was striking its own silver coins before Lord Calvert issued his coins; this was grudgingly allowed on a technicality, that the coins were made during the period of the English Civil War when there was no King on the throne. While the coinage continued into the 1680s, it retained the 1652 date, allowing them to skirt the edge of the law.

But the British could not have taken all of them since the first mention of the coin was in a publication from Berlin—so Kleeberg suggests that some of the Hessian troops stationed there somehow also procured examples, which were also never mentioned by them (or the British troops that would have been responsible for dispersing these coins), another highly unlikely scenario in the military world. Instead, these soldiers take them back home where, very soon thereafter, one ends up in the hands of a numismatist who published the coin—but the book was published in Berlin, which was then in Prussia. Prussia had no involvement in the American Revolution, and Kleeberg ignores the step of how coins liberated by Hessian soldiers got to Prussia just in time to be illustrated in a book. While the pieces of any puzzle can be forced to fit, this just does not ring true—and a far easier solution is completely ignored: that the coins originated in England or Europe (whether made in 1776 or 1783, or somewhere in-between is not relevant to the “where” side of the argument), a quantity ended up with a British coin dealer, who sold an example to a German numismatist, who then illustrated it in his book. This seems a far simpler chain of events since we know there were numismatists in most of the large European cities that had an interest in all coinages. This cross-Channel numismatic trade is not only documented, it negates the need for a convoluted wartime treasure being ferried away after literally being ignored for 5–7 years.

**Pages 194–95:** I will defer to the author of a book on coins hoards on the question of why no Continental dollars have been found in Continental Army campsites. But the lack of examples recovered as ground finds cuts both ways—yes, they would have been easily noticed if casually dropped, but coins were also lost in times of war or rapid retreat where the owners would not have the luxury of going back and picking them up. One would expect that if these were in use by soldiers who marched, ran, packed and unpacked in many places over short periods of time (and were known to be fond of a drink or two when available) that at least one would inevitably be lost and recovered by modern metal detectors. And if these were valued at roughly a penny, how many soldiers would actually waste much time looking for a lost specimen? There is, of course, another explanation for why none have been recovered from American soil, unmentioned by Kleeberg—because they weren't there (and perhaps didn't even exist while the war was being fought). Kleeberg's next argument about the lack of mention of Continental Dollars in contemporary newspapers rings hollow. He claims that the poem mentioned earlier and a few tantalizingly vague references in newspapers, none of which describe the coins in any detail, all refer to the Continental Dollar. This is claimed without any evidence; since Kleeberg believes the Con-

tinental Dollars were made in 1776 then those brief published snippets must therefore be about those very coins. But had this coinage been introduced as something of more value than the depreciating paper currency then that alone would have merited mention in every newspaper in the country, because not only was this something that would affect everyone, it would also give those supporting the fight hope that the new government was doing something to help them. Conversely, papers in areas that supported the British would have also been all over this coinage, gleefully proclaiming that the bankrupt rebels were trying to replace worthless paper with nearly-worthless tin. Again, the lack of mention seems far stronger evidence that the coins were simply not there to mention.

**Pages 196–99:** The idea of exactly *what* a Continental Dollar was has caused no shortage of confusion for numismatists ever since they were first collected. The exceedingly rare silver issues made sense because they were overstruck and would be expected to at least retain the value of the undertype. The brass pieces, nearly as rare, could conceivably been meant as a penny—though they would have been much larger than any copper coin in circulation at the time. The pewter pieces simply make no sense at all unless it also to circulate as a penny—one could argue the brass pieces were patterns and the pewter pieces what was intended, a fair argument given the numbers known. If the brass pieces were meant as patterns it could explain the presence of a security edge, but the pewter coins, valued at just a penny, would have no need for this expensive and time-consuming addition. The Continental Dollars would have been of a size and metal that was unknown to Americans (the tin Plantation tokens did not circulate here, and the closest copper coin in size would have been the Rosa American twopence from a half century earlier which had limited circulation then and would have disappeared from commerce by 1776). Kleeberg finds a novel way to explain all this—that the Continental Dollars were not so much intended to be circulating coins as something used as an enlistment bonus to entice people to sign up and go off to war. While intriguing, there is just no evidence to support this speculation. If soldiers were paid in *silver* Continental dollars many would have been needed and there would be far more than four examples surviving today. If the pewter and brass pieces were intended as a coin worth a penny then handing a few of them to a potential recruit would be little more than an insult, showing that their service (and life) was worth less than the price of a pint of ale. If the recruiters were trying to pass off a piece of tin as something worth its weight in silver, that would not have passed muster anywhere—and if soldiers were to be given something ridiculously overvalued as an enticement to recruit-

ment, why not just offer them the paper currency that was already printed and (at least in the early years) had retained much of its value; there was no need to go to the time or expense to mint a coin specifically for this purpose. Kleeberg suggests that soldiers got these coins and then quickly spent them—a valid argument at any time—but then doesn't discuss why those coins were spent (but never lost by drunken soldiers of course, since none have been recovered from the ground) but never discussed anywhere, by anyone—either the soldier or some merchant who took an unfamiliar coin and willingly gave merchandise in trade for it. It stretches credibility to think that the coins were made by “certain patriotic parties” who then gave or sold them to the army—again, without any paper trail or public notice during the time they were used, or at any point after the war when people would have bragged about their exploits and what they did to help the cause.

The other option here could be that the Continental Dollars were not meant as coins, but merely as some sort of proof that soldiers had taken an oath of enlistment, something like the challenge coins of the present day. This argument does not seem to have merit, as previous soldier bounties had always been paid in coin—and that coin had some real value (i.e., the soldiers would be able to immediately spend it at the nearest pub). But while a challenge coin of today might have great sentimental value, it cannot be spent and is, in effect, simply a medal. If the Continental Dollars were struck for the same purpose then they would also clearly not be coins, they would be medals.

**Page 200: KLEEBERG'S CONCLUSION:** Kleeberg claims American mintage and use of the Continental Dollars. In doing so, he ignores many of very valid points raised by Catherine Eagleton and Erik Goldstein and David McCarthy in their respective articles.<sup>28</sup> Kleeberg does not discuss where a coining press powerful enough to not just strike a large silver or brass coin but to overstrike a previously-struck silver coin was to be found in 1776 America. There was no American-made coinage that would have required such a press since the end of the Massachusetts silver coinages nearly a century earlier—and since those coins were much smaller and thinner, it is unlikely that John Hull would have gone to the extra expense and labor of building a press that had far more capacity (i.e., striking tonnage and sheer size) than was needed to make the coins he was authorized to make. Had a large press been built in 1776 one would expect some sort of paper trail if it was made on behalf of Congress or anyone with any ties

28. Catherine Eagleton, “Collecting America: Sarah Sophia Banks and the ‘Continental Dollar’ of 1776,” *Numismatic Chronicle* 174, 2014; Erik Goldstein, “The Myth of the Continental Dollar,” *The Numismatist*, in two parts, January 2018 and July 2018.

to that body—and some sort of mention somewhere, in newspapers or letters or diaries, if it had been built as a private speculation by patriots.

Similarly, there is a major problem in the metal content of the Continental Dollars, which Kleeberg ignores. He makes no mention of where in America a large supply of tin was procured—a metal that England controlled the supply of—right before or even during a prolonged war.<sup>29</sup> There were no tin coins in America to melt down and help the patriot cause—and if there were it seems far more likely that metal would have been diverted to the war effort to make bronze cannon, not to an unauthorized coinage. The brass coins are even more problematic considering that there were no coins or medals in brass struck in America until at least the early nineteenth century<sup>30</sup>—the entire brass-making industry in colonial America appears to have been limited to the making of brass pins used for wool making, one of the few uses of brass making England appears to have grudgingly allowed its colonies to conduct since the wool would be used for clothing and blankets needed by the colonists, and not made for export.<sup>31</sup> Zinc, which was necessary to make brass, was not mined in colonial America at all, and the main supply of this was also England—the Dutch did a good business in trading the metal at the time, but in order for them to get a supply to the rebellious colonies it would mean running the English naval blockade, with the problem of being drawn into that war, surely something that would not be done in order to move a small amount of metal. It is also worth noting here that brass is mostly made up of two metals—copper and zinc. Zinc was not available in the American colonies in any appreciable amount, but copper was mined in many places and abundant. If an American minter was going to produce a coin of low value, i.e. a penny, he would have made use of the inexpensive metal that was available, copper—and not try to somehow procure supplies of metals that were controlled by the enemy in order to make exotic looking coins that no Ameri-

29. Sandy Gerrard, *The Early British Tin Industry*, Tempus Publishing, 2000.

30. A possible exception is the 1714 Gloucester “shilling” token, which is struck in brass. Given the early date it is entirely possible that these were made in England, not in America—and while they have the XII indicative of the shilling denomination, it seems unlikely anyone would take a brass coin at the value of a silver one. Earlier musings that the piece may have been a form of a warehouse check would indicate an English or European origin as counters of this sort had been in use in those areas for several centuries. If these were made in America they must have been made in extremely small quantity—there are just two known specimens today—and this would not indicate any large-scale brass manufacture in this country, as a small quantity could easily be banged out by any blacksmith or metal worker. It is instructive to compare the quality of the brass planchets on the Gloucester tokens with those of the Continental Dollars in the same metal, as the latter were clearly made to a much higher standard.

31. Peter, Nancy and Herbert Schiffer, *The Brass Book: American, English and European, Fifteenth Century through 1850*, Schiffer Publishing, 1978.

can colonist would have been familiar with. The very lack of copper specimens is further proof that these pieces were not made in America, but were actually made in England or Europe, where the metals needed to strike pewter and brass were abundant and coiners had experience working with them.<sup>32</sup>

**Pages 200–11:** This is a very useful Appendix, collecting all printed mentions of the Continental Dollar up to 1790. Kleeberg gives ample background detail where known, and provides a translation for the 1783 publication in German. He cites multiple appearances of some of the earlier mentions in newspapers; while these may not specifically refer to the Continental Dollar, having the source information available will allow researchers to look closer at the newspaper issues around those dates to see if other mentions of coins are made. This section is well-written and scholarly, and will certainly be appreciated by future historians. The final entry in this Appendix is a letter from Paul Revere to a British author in 1790; Revere clearly states that he had never heard of any pewter money being made in America, but was sending along “two pieces of money” that answer to the description of money issued by the Continental Congress. At first read this seems to mean that Revere was enclosing at least one or maybe two Continental Dollars, but such is not the case, and his wording here is instructive. Revere states that one was “printed under the direction of the American congress”—the word printed showing it was a piece of paper money (likely one of the fractional dollar issues of February 17, 1776)—as a printer and metal worker Revere would have not made the mistake of saying a coin was “printed.” The other piece he described as answering the description “except the metal”—the description was of a pewter coin, so clearly he did not send a pewter Continental Dollar as that would be the same metal. What was almost certainly sent was a 1787 Fugio copper—a coin with the same general design as the Continental Dollar and the design found on the Continental currency issue mentioned above. Neither of these pieces would be worth much money at the time—the Continental currency was nearly worthless, and after the Coppers Panic of 1789 the Fugio copper would have been of little value in circulation.<sup>33</sup>

32. The author thanks Chris McDowell for sharing his research on the Pitt farthings to make this section concerning brass sounder. McDowell notes that the first commercial brass foundry established in the United States was not opened until 1802 in Waterbury, Connecticut—and it used zinc from England to make the metal. This is 35 years after the date Kleeberg suggests for an American coinage of the Continental Dollar.

33. The author thanks Erik Goldstein for pointing out that the coin described was likely not a Continental Dollar, but rather a 1787 Fugio copper.

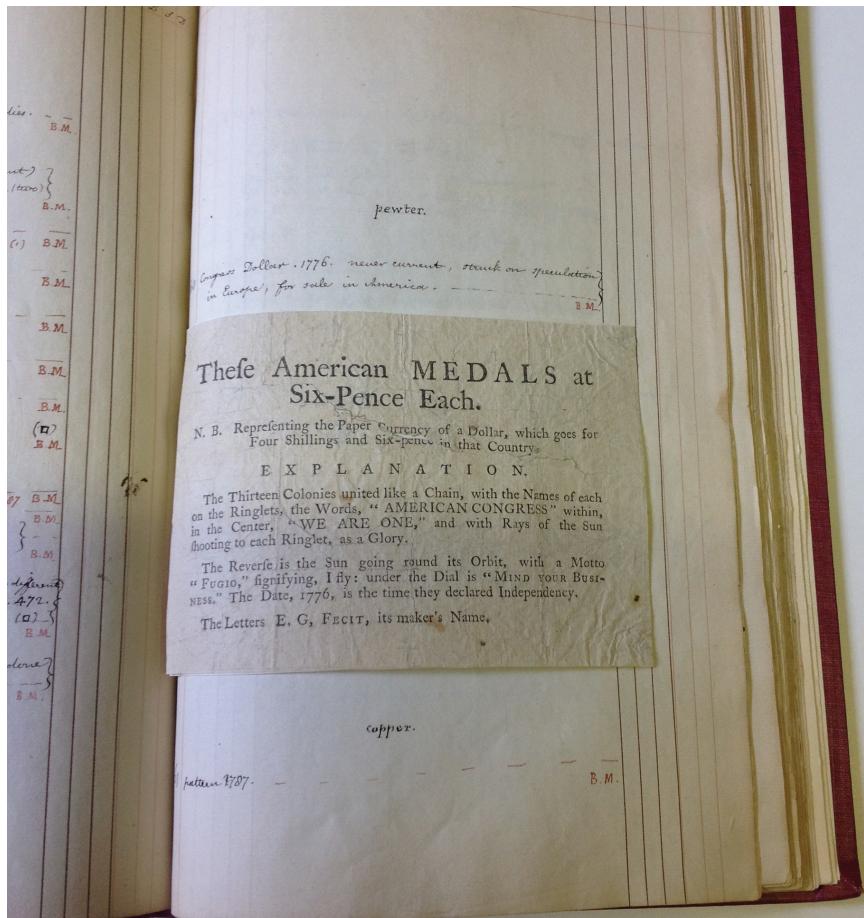


Figure 1. Miss Banks' journal, circa 1816, with her written statement on the Continental Dollar, as well as the advertisement she pasted in. Photo courtesy of the author.

**THIS AUTHORS COMMENTS:** The ledgers of Sarah Sophia Banks, which gave us the advertisement that started the whole debate on the Continental Dollars, are only briefly mentioned by Kleeberg, whereas they formed the basis for Eagleton's article, and were an important part of the one by Goldstein and McCarthy; this is because they are something of a double-edged sword. Miss Banks very clearly stated that the Continental Dollar was "never current" and that they were "stuck on speculation in Europe, for sale in America" (Fig. 1). This com-

ment places their origin in Europe with the aim to sell them in America, which seems implausible in the numbers they were made—whether as a medal or a coin that was never current. We note that Miss Banks placed her example in her ledger (and in her collection) with her American coins, and not her medals. This is striking because she had pasted the advertisement, which has the word “MED-ALS” in large, bold-face type, right below her handwritten entry. In that entry she describes the piece as “Congress Dollar. 1776”—the word “Dollar” here in jarring juxtaposition to “Medal” on the very same page. The flyer itself says the piece is “Representing the Paper Currency of a Dollar,” which may be the reason that something made of pewter was already being called a dollar—despite no denomination on the coin and the fact that pewter was never used for a dollar coin. The question is do we take Miss Banks’ ledger at its word? On one hand, she was an astute collector, who organized an enormous collection (of over 9,000 numismatic items and nearly quadruple that number of paper ephemera) in ways that previous numismatists had not. She had access to coin dealers and influential people who provided things for her collection, where one would assume information could be given, along with the coins. On the other hand, such information is only as reliable as the person who gave it—and sellers have been known to stretch the truth (or even ignore it) in the hopes of making a sale. There is also the problem of sheer quantity in her collection, which means that most ledger entries only get a few words since Miss Banks was personally writing these all out by hand, so each entry cannot be the extent of what was known about each coin. This may be the case with her ledger notation about the Continental Dollar being “for sale in America.” The flyer makes no mention of where the Continental Dollars were made nor any comment about them being made as coins that were never current, so these details must be things Miss Banks was told, either when she bought her example or shortly thereafter; this information does not necessarily need to be accurate. Nor do the flyer and coin need to have been acquired at the same time—could Miss Banks have been told the story that the Continental Dollar was something akin to a pattern for a contract coinage when she bought the piece, and then found the flyer at a later date? One can certainly envisage situations where she was given false information that she preserved—or where she felt that the information she was told was more accurate and needed to be written down so that the flyer was not the final word. Unfortunately, we just do not know, and her few brief words are certainly open for interpretation.

We do know that the two statements on this page—the printed flyer and handwritten entry—are in conflict, with one calling them medals and the other calling them at least pseudo-coins, so one of them has to be partially incorrect. By the time the first ledger was written in 1790 (the version illustrated was made

a quarter-century or so later when Miss Banks was organizing her collection and producing a final catalogue of it a few years prior to her death in 1818) she was already an avid hunter of things for her collection. In the realm of her eighteenth-century Provincial Tokens she is known to have tracked down some of the London minters and personally visited them to purchase pieces for her own collection, perhaps even acquiring rare edge varieties and off-metal pieces directly from the source. While she lived in London with her brother and his wife, her reach was further than just that city, as she was also in contact with Matthew Boulton, whose Soho Mint in Birmingham was turning out many tokens and medals and, after 1797, coins as well. Boulton appears to have been charmed enough by Miss Banks' collecting that he instructed his agents to supply her with an example of every numismatic item struck at his mint as they were being made.<sup>34</sup> This is highly speculative and with no evidence to support it, but perhaps Miss Banks' tenacity in searching out makers could explain why she was told the Continental Dollars were made in Europe—if she could easily find the maker she could just go straight to the source and buy them (and other things) directly, bypassing the dealer who needed to sell a large number of these pieces at a higher price. We note that Miss Banks' Provincial Tokens ledger contains the names of many makers, sometimes confirming previously noted sources but also sometimes giving a name to a maker that would have otherwise been lost to history, so she certainly did have a way of ferreting out such information.

This author does not pretend to know the answers—but the preponderance of evidence does not seem to point to American manufacture of the Continental Dollars, or much (if any) in the way of actual American circulation. Yes, some of them are worn—but so are many Rhode Island ship medals and Admiral Vernon medals, neither of which likely circulated in America either. Since there is no mention of this coinage anywhere in America prior to the end of the Revolution—not in newspapers, not in letters, not in diaries—it seems far likelier that the coins were simply not in America at this time. They are of a size and metal unlike anything made in America—but known in England and Europe. They have an edge device unlike anything made in America—but again known in England and Europe. They simply fit better over there than over here.

34. This also worked to Boulton's advantage, because Sarah Sophia Banks had access to influential people in the government and high social circles. One of her dearest friends—and also an avid collector—was the Princess Elizabeth, and in a letter from Boulton to Sir Joseph Banks he thanks Miss Banks for presenting "some of his Dollars to the Princesses." See Warren R. Dawson (editor), *The Banks Letters: A Calendar of the manuscript correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks preserved in the British Museum, the British Museum (Natural History) and Other Collections in Great Britain*, London, 1958, p. 141.

Under Kleeberg's scenario, we are asked to believe that an unknown American mint, set up with no Congressional oversight or funding, built or acquired a press large enough to strike silver and brass coins of a size never before coined in America. The coiners also somehow acquired large supplies of tin and zinc during wartime—from the country they were actually at war with. Then, they must have also somehow acquired the knowledge of working with brass on a larger scale and built rolling mills capable of turning out the very smooth, well-made planchets that the brass Continental Dollars are struck upon—and that they used their supply of brass to make coins, not cannon or other useful war materiel. To add to the implausibility of this scenario, all of this must have been occurred in just a few months under Kleeberg's chronology.

Contrast these problems, which Kleeberg ignores, with the possibility of an English or European manufacture for these coins. England had been striking pewter and brass medals for well over a century and both the Royal Mint and private medalists had ample experience in working with these metals. Kleeberg mentions that of the 481 medals from the 1760–1799 period in the book *British Historical Medals* "only 27" were struck in pewter and 52 in brass, and he uses these numbers to prove that pewter and brass weren't much used for British medals—yet he neglects to mention that there were *no* American-made medals in pewter or brass during this same time period.<sup>35</sup> England had ample supplies of both metals in this period, and there was no shortage of either in war time which meant that those metals would not be critical for the war effort and could be used for other purposes. England had many working engravers of various skill levels, and had numerous minting facilities that were capable of striking large-sized coins or medals (and a far greater number if one adds in the button makers who possessed the exact equipment needed to cut out circular planchets and stamp a design onto them). The number of such facilities meant that if the Continental Dollars were struck in England there would be no need (or expense, or record) of a special mint for making the coins. It thus seems likelier that England would have someone with the experience, equipment and material to strike Continental Dollars—and this is the case whether those coins were struck in either 1776 or 1783.

The same is true for a European manufacture—England was exporting tin in quantity, so even a country without native supplies would be able to acquire

<sup>35</sup> Kleeberg's reliance on this sole reference is problematical, as discussed earlier; these medals were of historical nature and intended for presentation or sale to a select audience of gentlemen collectors. Silver would be the norm for this type of medal, and copper/bronze the most-seen secondary metal. Pewter was too soft and tin was known to corrode, while brass had the connotation of being a cheap metal used for candlesticks and household uses, not something suitable for presentation to royalty, aristocracy or heroes of war.

the metal and have no problem in striking the pewter specimens. This author does not know enough about European medal makers in this era to competently assess the probability of a manufacture there. England probably had more private token and medal makers than any European country at the time, but there were certainly continental medalists working as well.

This, however, does not mean that they couldn't somehow be tied to America—if they were struck in England or Europe it could have been done because an American placed an order for them (something that happened in 1783 with the Nova Constellatio coppers, and a few years later with the Kentucky tokens and the Talbot, Allum & Lee cents). One cannot imagine a foreign power going to the expense of making a speculative coin for a country at war—but one can imagine a private mint, say one of the many token makers or medalists working in England (or elsewhere in Europe), receiving an order for several thousand coins and going to work, hoping to land a larger contract.

But unfortunately, 1776 does not seem to fit as the actual date of striking under this scenario. America had literally just jumped into a war which, on paper, it seemed unlikely to win (i.e., fighting against the country with one of the most highly trained armies and the absolute best fleet of warships in the world). Would any coiner want to get involved in something like that, especially for a relatively small production of pieces? If they were caught, a British minter could be accused of aiding the enemy. A minter in a neutral country could face the same charge, and a minter in a country that was often at war with England (such as France or Spain) would be wary of getting dragged into a conflict that was none of their doing.

Instead, it seems more likely that these coins were made slightly later than the date they proclaim, and probably after the end of the war in 1783. This makes the most sense, as by that date there would be no gamble about which side would win, and any coiner, anywhere—including England—could safely make them (as seen by the Nova Constellatios and other pieces mentioned above, which were made in England and exported to America without any problem, within a few months of the war's end). The 1776 date would thus be on the coin as a symbol: the year of the Declaration of Independence and the start of the war that liberated the American colonies—this is supported by the flyer in Miss Banks' ledger which states “The date, 1776, is the time they declared Independency,” in striking contrast to saying something like “these were struck in 1776.” If this were the case, they could have been ordered by someone in America—or done on speculation by someone in England, hoping to either interest the new country in a contract coinage or to actually sell them as medals, which were an even more popular collectible in England than coins were. This was the exact time the

eighteenth-century Provincial Tokens created a collecting frenzy, and tokens and medals were much more affordable than pursuing the gold and silver coinage of England. This is aptly illustrated by the large Continental Dollar being sold as a medal for only sixpence: for just the face value of a single gold sovereign a late eighteenth century collector could buy 40 Uncirculated Continental Dollars and multiples of that number of specially-made Provincial Tokens in impeccable grade.

If the Continental Dollars were originally struck as coins that venture clearly did not succeed, since a large quantity ended up in the hands of a British coin dealer shortly after the end of the Revolution—this we know thanks to Miss Banks foresight in saving that flyer. A British (and likely London) coin dealer would not have an American audience to sell these coins to—as far as he knew there were likely no numismatists on that continent at all. But he would have a fairly substantial British market—including collectors who might not be thrilled by buying a coin that basically commemorated the loss of their colonies, but might be interested in adding a medal for this new country into their cabinet, especially as its wording was mostly in English (and “Fugio” and “Fecit” would have been easily understood in a country and time where Latin was still taught in school). As discussed earlier, a medal could turn into something considered a coin by being placed in circulation in quantity—but a coin could be turned into a medal by a dealer selling a quantity as such. This is less likely, but it is a possibility and needs to be addressed.

But, had the Continental Dollars been intended as medals from the very beginning, then the British coin dealer who had these for sale in the 1785–1790 period could have also been the person who had them struck, hoping to sell them to the same group of customers described above, and perhaps with the hope of selling even more of them to Americans who had fought in the war (which would help explain the larger mintage than would be required for just British collectors). This scenario removes the need for an American placing the order for the Continental Dollars, as there were no American coin dealers at the time; the medals that were made for America to this point (1776–1790) were struck to honor those who did heroic service in the war. While there was certainly some interest in those limited medals, there were not a great number of collectors of them and they had little value other than sentimental, and there would be no collector market in America to sell a large quantity of medals until nearly a century later. If these were made as medals, under the order of a coin dealer, the sheer quantity struck (based on survival rates today) means that they must have originated in England or Europe but, as mentioned, likely with the hopes of selling some of them in America—not as items collected by serious numismatists,

but as mementos of the war just concluded. Some of these may have actually made it over for that purpose, but that number would not have been large since we know a quantity did end up for sale in England.

To continue with this possible scenario, the British dealer who ordered or handled them likely did sell a quantity, since we have an inordinate number of high-grade specimens extant today. But it's probable that not all of them sold, as one cannot imagine several thousand collectors clamoring for an example, and with the number of surviving specimens it appears a likely *minimum* mintage figure is in the mid-thousands. It could be that after the early to mid-1790s this British dealer was left with an unsold supply, decided that no more were going to be sold and dumped the remainder of his stock into circulation in England. This would have been ridiculously easy to do at the time—the Provincial Tokens first appeared in British circulation in 1787, and by 1792 they were seen in commerce far more frequently than any official British copper coin (and would have been preferred by all to the counterfeit copper halfpennies also in circulation, since the tokens were larger, heavier, and often much better made—and in theory could be redeemed for good coin or paper money by the token issuer). There are many large, penny-sized pieces in the Provincial Token series (the very size of the Continental Dollars), some of them come in brass and silver, two of the metals the Continental Dollars are known in; there are many that come in "white metal" but no analysis has been performed on these to determine if the metal content is the same or reasonably close to the pewter alloy of the Continental Dollars—but since those are mostly made of tin and lead and those same metals are the main alloys in what is generally called white metal in the period, it is likely that at least some of the Provincial Tokens will be found to have a similar alloy to the Continental Dollars. Some of these white metal Provincial Tokens have decorated edges as well, though this would normally be lettering, milling or engrailing. While this unknown dealer would not get the sixpence per medal he originally asked for if he circulated his remaining inventory, he would at least get something—and would be rid of all the remaining specimens at once.

If this happened it likely occurred prior to 1799 when the Soho Mint coinage struck by Matthew Boulton was in mass circulation. Boulton's coinage spelled the end of the Provincial Token series, making those already struck difficult to use in commerce—and most of those tokens were melted down for their metal value when they were no longer acceptable as currency. If the remainder of the Continental Dollars were put into circulation at the time the Soho Mint coinage was announced in 1787, it would allow them to remain in circulation for a couple years before enough of the Soho coinage would be in use to finally drive out all the token and counterfeit coins; this would be a sufficient time for

those Continental Dollars to receive the levels of wear seem on the circulated specimens extant today. This scenario could explain those circulated Continental Dollars—they did circulate, just in England, not America. How then did some get over to America to fill the cabinets of nineteenth-century collectors? Simply by Americans paying more for them than the British thought they were worth—the very same reason that there are today more counterfeit eighteenth century British and Irish coppers in America than there are in England. This scenario also explains why a mintage of several thousand pieces, made for collectors, had a fairly low survival rate—the high-grade pieces extant are those that never actually circulated and were preserved in collector's cabinets, albeit with some receiving light cabinet friction to account for the AU and high-end EF grades on some today. Those that exist in circulated grades today are what remain of the group released into circulation around 1797—but just a small fraction of that group since, like the Provincial Tokens, once these were no longer acceptable in commerce they too would have been melted in quantity. The most satisfying feature of this scenario is that it gives a plausible reason why something with a mintage of at least the mid-thousands would have a survival rate of fewer than 10%—the vast majority hit the melting pot when they no longer had numismatic or circulating value.

While this is intriguing, it does not solve all the problems, the most nagging of which is why are there so many die varieties of Continental Dollars for such a relatively small coinage. One would expect a pair of dies to strike at least 20,000 pieces in this era, and likely more if a softer metal like pewter was being coined. This could possibly be explained by a coin dealer making things specifically for collectors—if you have one reading “CURRENCY” you would likely also want a “CURENCY” and a “CURRENEY” variation. The different metals can also be explained the same way: if you have a pewter one you would probably be interested in getting a brass one—or a more expensive silver example. The lack of copper Continental Dollars is surprising at first glance, as that was the main metal used for the Provincial Token series—but there are many varieties of Provincial Tokens (especially those listed in the Middlesex series, many of them penny size) that come only in white metal and others that come in several metals except for copper. Another potential hurdle is their lack of mention in the British numismatic works written on tokens during the late eighteenth century—but this could have a threefold answer: first that the 1776 date on the Continental Dollars made them too early to list in those works (the Provincial Token coinage started in 1787); second that these were explicitly being sold as medals and not tokens at the time those works were being written and would likely not be

included as such; and third that they were obviously American in nature, which few contemporary British authors listed in their works.<sup>36</sup>

Is this the answer? I wouldn't bet my life on it—but it seems more plausible to me than the scenario that Kleeberg laid out, and may be an avenue worthy of further research.

If the truth does lie somewhere in this realm—that a beloved artifact of American independence turns out to be manufactured in England (or Europe), what does that mean for collectors? The answer is: very little. The American colonial series includes a few types made in England, from the early days on up to the eve of the Revolution (from the 1688 American Plantation tokens to the 1773 Virginia halfpence which were placed into circulation a year after the Boston Tea Party, and just months before the Declaration of Independence). But the American colonial series also includes things that were made in England well after the Revolution—including many of the post-Confederation token issues and much of the early Washingtonia. Their manufacture in England does not make them any less American-relevant, and they are avidly collected and appreciated as part of the larger “colonial” series. The same will be true of the Continental Dollar. An English origin does not change the number known, the grades they are in, or the overall desirability of the coin. While the piece may be delisted as something struck in the pivotal year of 1776, it still commemorates that year—and if it was made in England then that itself is somewhat impressive, showing that commerce trumped any ill feelings over the loss of the colonies. If it was struck as a medal and thus loses its denomination as a “dollar”—a denomination that was clearly unlikely even if it was struck as a coin—then there might be some silver dollar collectors who no longer feel the need to add one to their collection, but that number would likely be offset by medal collectors who would now need to add an example to their collections.

What does seem clear is that 225+ years after the Continental Dollars were made, they remain one of the more mysterious issues relating to colonial American numismatics—a series that is replete with mystery. For all my disagreements with Kleeberg's conclusions, he has shed some new light on the series, and given us all much to think about, and for this he should be commended.

Clearly there is more to discover.

36. Jeff Rock “The Mysterious Auctori Plebis Token,” *op. cit.*, includes a detailed look at the contemporary literature on the eighteenth-century Provincial Tokens, and which authors included American relevant tokens in their works.

## Research Notes Regarding the Non Dependens Status Copper Coinage

BYRON WHITE (DECEASED)

### EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The *Journal of Early American Numismatics* seeks to both educate and entertain our subscribers. In addition, we strive to stimulate discussion and disseminate factual information that can form the basis of future research into colonial numismatics. This was the case when we published the transcripts of the Connecticut Mint Ledger Books a few years ago. Raw data and original source material in the right hands can be invaluable.

What follows is admittedly a little out of the ordinary. We are publishing here the lightly edited research notes of Roby Byron White, Jr. (1919–2006) on the 1778-dated Non Dependens Status copper coinage. This coinage, which consists of the legendary original and nineteenth-century copies thereof, has been called “one of the most enduring mysteries in American numismatics.”<sup>1</sup> The controversy for over 100 years has centered on the question of the origin, authenticity, and location of the original from which the many copies were made. A search of the Newman Portal reveals very little information on the series and certainly nothing as detailed as what appears below. Much ink was spilled on the Non Dependens Status copper towards the end of the nineteenth century, but since that time little

1. David Bowers, *Whitman Encyclopedia of Colonial and Early American Coins* (Whitman 2009), p. 302.



Figure 1. Unique engraved Non Dependens Status copper. Courtesy: Q. David Bowers.

new information has appeared in print. Dave Bowers has written the most insightful modern summary of this enigmatic coinage in his *Encyclopedia of Colonial and Early American Coins*, crediting Mr. White as the source of his information stating that White “studied the coin over many years.”<sup>2</sup>

In November 2018, Dave Bowers approached me with Byron White’s research notes on the 1778-dated Non Dependens Status copper. These notes and the rights to them were purchased by Bowers decades before along with a unique engraved Non Dependens Status copper (Fig. 1). Bowers felt White’s research notes might be useful to future numismatists and wanted to know if JEAN was interested in publishing them. After reviewing the material, I agreed. What appears below is a transcript of White’s research notes prepared between 1969 and 1972. These notes contain the most in-depth research known on the series and demonstrate a tenacious researcher who turned over every stone in his search for answers. Indeed, I was so impressed by White’s research that I set out to discover more about him.

Roby Byron White, Jr. was born on April 13, 1919, in Neodesh, Kansas. Probably to distinguish himself from his father he went by “Byron.” He attended Kansas State University in the early 1940s and became an electronics engineer. A search of the *Official Gazette of the United States Patent Office* turns up many patents for complex mechanical devices in his name. A further search shows that many of these inventions were later patented in Asia and Europe. As early as the 1950s White developed a passion for numismatics that covered many areas, including United States proof coins, United States patterns, and a study on mint engineering and coinage practice. Later he turned his primary focus to Chinese coins; a topic on which he became a renowned expert. He traveled the world looking for coins

2. *Ibid.*, p. 303.

to add to his impressive collection and in 1976 published a book along with his wife Marjorie titled *A Comprehensive Finding List of Chinese Cash 618 AD to 1912 AD*. Byron lived most of his life in Sheldonville, Massachusetts, but also spent time in nearby Rhode Island and New Hampshire where he maintained a home. It was in New Hampshire that Byron and Dave Bowers would sometimes visit over lunch and discuss their love of coins and antique automobiles. White was restoring an old 1930s Bentley, and Bowers states that “from the engine to the chassis, Byron was a perfectionist.” It is evident that White applied this same degree of attention to detail to his numismatic research that he did his restoration projects. In 1969 he began investigating the 1778-dated Non Dependens Status copper. While his neatly organized notes only cover his research between 1969 and 1972, it was a quest he continued for the rest of his life. This is apparent because White later communicated to Bowers that he thought the portrait on the coin was likely that of Samuel Adams—a fact not annotated in the research notes presented here. White died on January 30, 2006.

Christopher R. McDowell  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
December 6, 2018

**NOTES ON THE ENGRAVED PIECE: “NON DEPENDENS STATUS”  
WITH REFERENCES TO THE ROBINSON COPY  
NOTES FROM 20 OCTOBER 1969**

DeWitt in his monograph on Robinson states that George Lovett made the Robinson copy dies in late 1862. Further, Robinson did not strike any copies or medals prior to 1860.

**References, with Abstracts, Pertaining to the “Non Dependens Status”**

Norton’s Literary Letter #2, 1858, Drawing

“ .... piece is from the collection of Winslow J. Howard of NYC ... in pure copper and is truly a well-executed design ... This piece is without doubt unique, and is supposed to be one of the many pattern pieces engraved and designed by Paul Revere.”

Hickox, *American Coinage*, 1858, page 76—Description—Reference to Norton.

Dickeson, *American Numismatical Manual*, 1859, page 89  
 Drawing, Plate VII, No 13, Diameter is given as Size 8, Description

“An engraved piece ... We found this specimen in the cabinet of Mr. Howard ...the only one of the kind we have seen.”

Page 249, Translation: “Independent of Position”

Prime, W.C., *Coin, Medals, and Seals*, 1861  
 Sales prices section page 246 number 21—“No Sale”

-----1862 Date of Robinson Copy

Crosby, *Early Coins of America*, 1873 page 306, Drawing, Diameter is Size 19 “A fine specimen of an engraved pattern is ... Nothing is known of the origin or history of this piece.”

Dye, *Rare Coin Encyclopedia*, 1883, page 210, Drawing, Size 19, Border plain, Edge Plain

“The origin and history of this fine engraved pattern piece are unknown; the specimen is interesting as perhaps the earliest presentation upon coin of the legend of an independent American state ... Some coin dealers advertise the Non Dependens Status as “a rare copper worth \$100.00”

Heath, *History of Ancient and Modern Coinage*, 1871, page 41, no direct reference  
 “In ... Virginia and Maryland, tobacco was used as a medium of exchange ...”

Evans, *History of U.S. Mint*, 1885, Picture of Robinson Copy Plate VI, page 76, Diameter given as Size 19, Description. (Copy of Dye, F above)

Smith, *U.S. Mint and Coins*, 1884, page 82, Drawing “A very rare if not unique piece ...Judging by the copy that has been made of the...”<sup>3</sup>

Smith, *Visitors Guide to the US Mint*, 1885, page 69, drawing page 66 Copy of statement of Reference I above.

Wm von Bergen, *Rare Coins of America*, 1889, page 118, Drawing “This coin is of unknown origin and found only engraved ...”

3. Editor’s note: In the original document the rest of this sentence cannot be read.

The drawing in Crosby is a direct copy from Norton's Literary Letter

References A-C-E-F-H-I-J and K all say the original of the Non Dependens Status was an engraved piece (J and H are redundant). There is no question that some copied from others but there was at least one that must have seen a piece and started it.

### Notes on the Symbols

The oval shield with flag and sword is not yet located although Dickeson says it is "the arms of France." The French shield on their coin reverse was a simple shield with three *fleur-de-lis*.

Moon face with wings. In Armory this is called a Gorgoneion and is fairly common although I have not been able to learn its history.

Tobacco leaf—see reference G.

1778—First year of the Confederation

Non Dependens Status: *Dependens* is the participle of the verb *dependo* meaning Weighing of or Hanging From, thus Non Dependens, not hanging from, independent. Status means situation. In checking with Latin scholars at Boston State College and Boston Latin School at Boston, the following interpretations are all acceptable:

Independent Situation

Status not hanging

Value not dependent, etc.

The correct Latin order would be STATUS NON DEPENDENS

### Notes on Size of Piece

The actual size and weight of the unique engraved piece and Robinson copy pieces are:

Engraved:	1.140 inches in diameter (1.187 is 1 3/16)	145.8 grains
Robinson:	1.088	1.093 is 1 3/32 149.6
Robinson:	1.093	158.5 (Richard Picker)

Two coin scales are used:

Mionnet Scale: Engraved piece is perfect size 8      Ref C says Size 8  
Robinson copy about 7 1/2

Sixteenth Scale: Engraved piece is about 18 1/2  
Robinson copy 17 1/2

Reference E, F and H says Size 19

### **Drawing Details**

There is a large difference in the hair line below the ear between the engraved piece and the copy. The drawings in Norton's Literary Letter (copied in Crosby) show it identical to the engraved piece if one includes the lower area of shading.

The feather tunic on the engraved piece has only one row of feathers each with three tiers of an oval design. This detail is faithful on the Norton drawing except Norton shows more than the actual number of feathers. The Robinson Copy shows three rows of feathers.

It is interesting that the Robinson copy faithfully reproduces the hair line as drawn in Dickeson. Dickeson shows two rows of feathers, the Robinson copy has three rows. Also the copy followed the placement of the wings on the moon face as shown on the drawing.

Richard Picker has pointed out differences between the Crosby sketch (Norton) and the engraved piece at hand. These differences are:

One band across the chest  
Distance between bottom of shield and globe  
Lack of horizontal lines in French seal on the mail  
Lack of definition in sheaf of tobacco

### **Current Status of Investigation as to Who Made It**

Norton refers to Paul Revere.

Catherine Buehler (expert and book writer on early American Silversmiths and engravers) has seen the engraved piece and is quite confident it is not the work

of Paul Revere or any other American silversmith. She was not familiar with the work of the die-sinkers.

Details of the letters, serifs, and manner of making the sevens follows the French school of Dupré and Duvivier. Duvivier's Academy of Medicine medal series has many pieces with the specific details of the "1", "7" and "E".

The Fleur-de-lis on both obverse and reverse give the piece a distinct French impression.

Duvivier's *Order of St. Michael* medal of 1779 has a bust of Louis XVI with forehead, lack of stop, nose, chin and eye line that is almost identical to the engraved piece. The hair of course is curled and quite different, however there are some young head medals of Louis XVI that have a very similar hair line to the engraved piece.

The 1797 Castorland piece (Duvivier) is of similar lettering style including identical "7" but different "1".

Halliday's Washington medal (Baker 70) has similarities in the lettering.

With the aid of Cornelius Vermeule at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, a survey was made of the French coins and medals of the late 1700's. Specifically a one *sou* piece of 1778, museum number 03424, was the identical diameter of the engraved piece and weighed 171.4 grains. Such a planchet would have ample material to do the engraving and have 145 grains remaining. The *sou* was struck N-S, same as the engraved piece. The Robinson copy is struck N-N. Efforts are now being made to obtain several sous of the date for further comparison.

Two pictures are enclosed showing obverse and reverse of both the engraved piece and the Robinson copy. These are to be considered of the same confidential nature as this memo.

END

Editors Note: In the two images attached to the original manuscript, White compares the engraved piece (Fig. 1) to the Robinson copy (Figs. 2 and 3) and notes that the Robinson copy has a N-N striking and the engraved piece has a N-S orientation.



Figure 2. Eric Newman's Robinson copy of Non Dependens Status copper. Newman's envelope for this coin demonstrates his opinion that there is no original coin from which this was copied. Courtesy: Heritage Auctions.



Figure 3. Robinson copy of Non Dependens Status copper. The word "copy" does not appear under the bust on this example, having been mechanically removed. Circa 1860 George H. Lovett prepared copy dies at the request of Alfred S. Robinson, from which 100 impressions were made in copper and six in silver. Courtesy: Stack's Bowers Auctions.

**25 OCTOBER 1970**  
**ADDENDUM TO THE**  
**NOTES ON THE ENGRAVED PIECE: 'NON DEPENDENS STATUS'**  
**DATED 20 OCTOBER 1969**

The following investigations have been made:

A survey was made of old coin catalogs at the ANS, New York. Two references were found:

J. M. Finotti, Woodward Sale #4, 11/11/1862

Lot 1393

1778 Non Dependens Status. For a description and engraving of this coin see Dickeson, page 90. This piece is in most beautiful condition, perfectly unique, and is perhaps the most remarkable and valuable coin in the entire collection. Its origin is traced with tolerable degree of certainty to the staunch old Revolutionary patriot, Paul Revere, of Boston.

Price \$70.00

In the same sale an original Higley copper sold for \$50.00, a 1792 silver center cent for \$52.50 and a 1793 half-cent EF for \$4.00.

W. Elliot Woodward's 88th Sale, 6/28/86, Lot 745

Robinson Copy of Non Dependens Status

Original in the Howard Collection, purchased in the Finotti Sale by Mrs. Judge Paige of New York, since which time it appears to be unknown to numismatists.

A check of the early membership lists of the ANS does not find a listing for a Judge or Mrs. Paige.

Investigations were made at the following locations in Paris with results indicated:

Bibliothéque Nationale

M. Jacques Yvon and Mlle J. Jacquoit

Surveyed four bound portfolios of original drawings of coins and medals by Dupré and Duvivier—no sketches of similarity to the NDS were found.

A survey of the cabinet of medals of the period provided nothing similar to the NDS

Several books on the works of the contemporary engravers were reviewed. In one book, Charles Saunier, the Works of Augustin Dupré, there is a picture of a medal of St. George hand carved by Dupré. The piece itself was supposed to be at the Musée Carnavalet but subsequent investigation indicated the piece had been lost. On a second trip, Mlle Jacquoit had tentatively identified the portrait as that of Philippe d'Anjou who later became Charles V of Spain, and she stated that the presence of the fleur-de-lis indicated either a king or prince of the Bourbon family.

Musée Carnavalet—M. Michael Gallet

As indicated, the Dupré medal could not be found. Additional drawings by Duprée, Duvivier and Gatteaux were reviewed with no results.

École des Beaux Arts—Mme W. Bouleau-Rabaud  
Drawings by Gatteaux—nothing found

Paris Mint—Mme Goldenberg

Search of the archives found nothing.

Mme Goldenberg was of the opinion that the profile was Spanish. This opinion was completely independent of Mlle Jacquoit's findings.

At this point only one French one *sou* piece had been located either in the United States or Paris. This piece was dated 1779. It is identical in diameter to the NDS.

This *sou* and the NDS were run on the X-ray refraction apparatus at the Harmer-Rooke facility in New York. The curves of the two pieces were practically identical; both contained a trace of arsenic but no tin or zinc. Tin and zinc are frequently found in native American copper.

The search now turned to the heraldry aspect as the shield appears on both sides of the coin.

I got in touch with the Rev. EVN Goetchius, chairman of the Committee on Heraldry of the New England Historic Genealogical Society. He put me in touch with Mr. Henry Beckwith of Providence who was making a trip to England.

Mr. Beckwith searched the English records and spoke to several experts about the piece. The consensus is that the shield is strictly allegorical in nature. No identification to a family can be found. It can be considered symbolic of the ties between America and France during that period.

A search of the personal papers of Paul Revere was made at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Nothing that related to either this piece or the Massachusetts

coppers was found. Most of the papers are things received by Revere rather than his own work.

Incidental Information:

Crosby p. 304 speaks of an "Engraved Piece" by Paul Revere. Revere also appears to have done the Massachusetts Penny and Half Penny, both engraved by hand.

END

**6 APRIL 1971**  
**ADDENDUM TO THE**  
**NOTES ON THE ENGRAVED PIECE: "NON DEPENDENS STATUS"**  
**DATED 20 OCTOBER 1969**

This memo to be considered of the same confidential nature as the original reference.

The following investigations have been made:

Woodward's 88th sale, 6/28/86, Lot 745, stated that the piece was sold to Mrs. Judge Paige. Three known Finotti Sale catalogs mark the piece to Cogan (Of Philadelphia), so he must have acted as agent or immediately resold the piece.

It was decided to try to trace the history of the original piece.

In McAdam's *History of the Bench and Bar of New York*<sup>4</sup> it was found that a Judge Alonzo Christopher Paige, Judge of the Court of Appeals, had died in Schenectady on March 31, 1868. Further searching showed that Mrs. Harriet Bowers Paige (Mrs. Judge Paige) died at Albany on 3/31/1867. The *New York Times* carried an obituary of Mrs. Paige on April 7, 1867 describing her as an active lady, interested in science and the arts, and a student of the history of her city and country.

Mrs. Paige left no will. Judge Paige left a will filed in Schenectady. They had four children: Harriett (Campbell, later Greene), Clara (Payne), Caroline (Lansing), and a son Edward who never married. Harriett married before the death of her parents. Edward established a law practice in Schenectady and never married. The bulk of the estate went to Clara and Caroline. No mention of a coin collection was made in the will.

The family was traced to two living descendants, Mrs. Harriett Milliken and Mr. Pennington Whitehead, both of New York City. Mrs. Milliken is the daughter

4. Editor's note: David McAdam, *History of the Bench and Bar of New York*, (New York Hist. Co. 1897).

of Harriett by her second marriage to George deB Greene and the granddaughter of Mrs. Judge Paige. She referred to her grandmother by the family title of "Madame Paige." Mrs. Milliken traced the family history and gave a series of names. She vaguely remembered a coin collection and suggested it went to either Clara or Caroline. The names to be searched were:

Alonzo Paige Lansing (moved out west)  
William A. Campbell  
Douglas Campbell  
Maria Whitehead  
Maria Duane Miller  
Maria Elizabeth Payne  
Anna Hall Payne

Mr. Whitehead did not know of the coin collection but guessed it probably went to one of the first three on the above list. He gave a 1938 address for Alonzo Paige Lansing of Los Olivos, California.

Mr. Frances Campbell at the ANS ran a check on the above names and the only find was a sale of "The Alonzo Paige Lansing Collection" by Harry J. Lelande at Los Angeles, Sept. 20, 1928.

Two catalogs of this auction were located, one at the ANS, the other from Frank Katen. Neither was priced or marked. The catalog does not list the NDS as a separate lot or mention it by name. We can only assume it was not recognized by Lelande and was included in lot 313, "Miscellaneous store cards and medals. All fine to UNC. 11 pcs."

The engraved piece Non Dependens Status was obtained by the writer from Mr. Ken Nichols at the ANA convention in Philadelphia.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Nichols writes that he obtained the piece directly from the Max Mehl estate in 1953.

Since the piece had not appeared to numismatic notice since 1862 it would seem probable that the piece was in lot 313 of the Lelande sale and was either purchased by Mehl or found its way into his hands.

END

5. Editor's note: This was probably the 1957 convention.

**25 JUNE 1971**  
**ADDENDUM TO THE**  
**NOTES ON THE ENGRAVED PIECE: "NON DEPENDENS STATUS"**  
**DATED 20 OCTOBER 1969**

The following investigations have been made:

An effort has been made to determine if Lelande's sale book of his 1928 auction still existed.

A great deal of effort turned up his daughter, Mrs. J. H. Steensen of Santa Monica. Mrs. Steensen gave the information that her father had died in 1966 at the age of 96 after a long illness. All coin and stamp material had been disposed of "25 or 30 years ago" and no records were left.

At the Los Angeles C.O.I.N. convention, June '71, I spoke with Mr. Ralph Mitchell concerning Lelande and Mehl. Mehl had spent a great deal of time in Los Angeles during those years and he knew Lelande very well. However, there was an ANA meeting in the East about that time and Mitchell doubted that Mehl would have been at Lelande's Los Angeles auction. Subsequent checking shows that the ANA meeting was a full month before the auction.

Abe Kosoff remembered the engraved Non Dependens Status being in the Mehl estate and says that it is the only fully engraved NDS he has ever seen. He has some of Mehl's records and will at some point check what he has for any indication of the Lelande auction.

Ken Lee knew both Mehl and Lelande and indicated that Mehl spent a lot of time in the Los Angeles area during that period.

END

**16 JANUARY 1972**  
**ADDENDUM TO THE**  
**NOTES ON THE ENGRAVED PIECE: "NON DEPENDENS STATUS"**  
**DATED 20 OCTOBER 1969**

The following investigations have been made:

Searches have been made at the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, and at The Papers of Benjamin Franklin at Yale University. Nothing of import has been found. There are a few French medals of Franklin that bear some similarities to the portrait on the NDS, particularly one by Bernier. Not close enough to be of import.

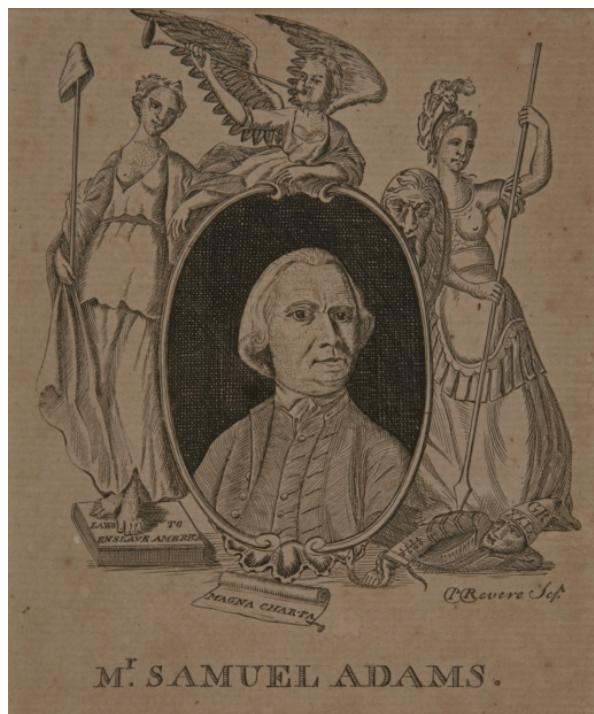


Figure 4. Engraving by Paul Revere of Samuel Adams. According to David Bowers, Byron White suggested that the bust image on the Non Dependens Status copper was that of Samuel Adams.

Further searches were made of the French sources by Miss Diane Della Loggia with no success.

Correspondence with Mr. E. McClung Fleming of the Winterthur Museum has expanded his thesis of the derivation of "Liberty" from "Britannia"—both female figures. However, he states that in the 1770's "American patriots sought a symbol to represent their love of liberty and republican leanings ...they turned to the figure of Tammany, a male Indian Chief."

In the George Fuld literature sale there was a Leland catalog which was purchased. This catalog has a price of \$4.00 in ink and a pencil checkmark by lot 313. Conversation with Fuld indicates he does not know where he obtained the catalog but probably came to him in one of the "lots" of numismatic material that he had purchased. The bid sheet was missing from the Fuld-Leland catalog.

END

## Identification and Classification of an Important New Variety of the Massachusetts Silver Coinage: The Salmon 11-X Pine Tree Shilling

CHRISTOPHER J. SALMON (PARADISE VALLEY, ARIZONA)

One of the most remarkable coins in the Massachusetts Silver Series is the Salmon 10-X (Noe-12) Pine Tree shilling (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The only known example of this variety was found in the Castine Hoard, which was deposited in 1704 and recovered in 1840, as ascertained by Philip L. Mossman.<sup>2</sup> It shows mild wear, consistent with a coin struck in the last quarter of the seventeenth century and thus possibly concurrently with regular issues of the Massachusetts Mint (the mint having ceased operations by 1683). But the 10-X has several anomalous features distinguishing it from all other putative regular mint issues. These have led to inconsistent classification of the variety since it was first described and illustrated by Sylvester Crosby in 1875.<sup>3</sup> Sydney Noe listed it among the large planchet Pine Tree shillings in his 1952 monograph,<sup>4</sup> as did Q. David Bowers in his 2009 encyclopedia.<sup>5</sup> But it appeared among the small planchet Pine Tree shillings in Walter Breen's 1988 encyclopedia<sup>6</sup> and in Don Taxay's 1975 catalogue.<sup>7</sup>

1. C. J. Salmon. 2010. pp. 19–21.

2. P. L. Mossman. 2013. p. 47. Dr. Mossman has confirmed these details in private discussions and correspondence, including this dating of the Castine Hoard and the inclusion of the 10-X Pine Tree shilling in the hoard.

3. S. S. Crosby. 1875. p. 58.

4. S. Noe. 1952. pp. 33–34.

5. Q. D. Bowers. 2009. p. 46.

6. W. Breen. 1988. p. 17.

7. D. Taxay. 1975. p. 6.



Figure 1. Salmon 10-X Pine Tree shilling (Noe 12).



Figure 2. Salmon 11-X Pine Tree shilling.

Such discordance of opinion among experts is understandable, since the 10-X, unlike any of the better-established regular mint issues, has features of both the large and small planchet Pine Tree shillings, as well as some characteristics that are not generally seen in either category.<sup>8</sup>

The style of the tree is certainly distinct and not typical of either large or small planchet Pine Tree shillings, although it is arguably closer to that of the small planchet varieties. The lettering clearly resembles the style of small planchet shillings, with some characters seemingly produced with punches as observed on some small planchet varieties. But the Ns are all backwards, which might not be expected if a punch used, and, in fact, backwards lettering is never found on regular issue small planchet Pine Tree shillings. The spelling of MASASTHVSETS on the Salmon 10-X Pine Tree shilling is not otherwise seen on presumptively genuine Massachusetts Silver coins of any variety.

The Salmon 10-X Pine Tree Shilling shows no features to indicate that it was minted with a rotary apparatus such as the rocker press used to strike the regular issue large planchet Pine Tree shillings. It has a round inner circle of dots (with an

8. C. J. Salmon. 2010. p. 20.

inner circle index of 1.0) on both obverse and reverse and shows no waviness in its flan or peripheral flan irregularities at 6 or 12 o'clock.<sup>9</sup> The flan was cut by hand, similar to large planchet Pine Tree shillings, and, although intermediate in size between large and small planchet Pine Tree shillings, it is closer to the diameter of a large planchet shilling. The strike is centered well and the coin does not appear to be clipped, yet it is significantly underweight at 62.3 grains. This weight, only rarely seen with unaltered genuine coins, is strongly suggestive of a contemporary circulating counterfeit, even though the fabric and subjective feel of the coin might suggest otherwise. It was one of Eric P. Newman's prized possessions and he always held that it was a genuine mint issue. Breen claimed that Picker had "punchlinked" the variety to an obvious counterfeit but does not support this with a written reference.<sup>10</sup>

A Pine Tree shilling closely related to the Salmon 10-X variety was discovered recently<sup>11</sup> and is designated here as Salmon 11-X (Fig. 2). I have closely examined both the new variety and the 10-X in hand and have compared them side by side. As noted for the 10-X, the 11-X shows no evidence of rotary press striking. It has workmanship and fabric similar to the 10-X and demonstrates softly struck details in the central portions of obverse and reverse that are relatively augmented by moderate wear. Both the 10-X and the new 11-X variety share the same reverse die, indicating a common origin for the two coins. This implies further that the 11-X was produced in the late seventeenth century, since, as already mentioned, the only known example of the closely related 10-X Pine tree shilling (made in the same workshop as the 11-X) shows signs of having circulated for some time before it was deposited with the Castine Hoard of 1704. The slight discrepancy between the 10-X and 11-X coins in the configuration of the reverse lettering at 6 o'clock—most apparent in the relative alignment of the characters N and E—is due to a double strike on the 10-X piece and not to alteration of the reverse die by re-engraving. Because of significant wear, the spelling of Massachusetts cannot be discerned on the 11-X obverse.

Although the original source of the new Salmon 11-X Pine Tree shilling variety is not known, available evidence suggests that it is of late seventeenth century origin, as affirmed for the closely related Salmon 10-X variety. This is particularly noteworthy, since at least most other known varieties of circulating counterfeits in the Massachusetts Silver series appear to be of later eighteenth century origin, including the Salmon 13-X, 14-X, and 15-X (Noe 13, 14, and 31, respectively) and

9. *Ibid.* pp. 43–53.

10. W. Breen. 1988. p. 17.

11. Reportedly found in a box of miscellaneous coins purchased in October 2017 at a tag sale in Princeton, New Jersey.

16-X Pine Tree shillings.<sup>12</sup> The newly-discovered 11-X coin appears unclipped and weighs 54.1 grains, which is well within the expected weight range for circulating counterfeits. This weight is significantly below the theoretical 72 grain standard of a regular-issue Massachusetts Mint shilling<sup>13</sup> and roughly intermediate between the 62.3 grain weight of the lone example of the Salmon 10-X variety and the average intended weight of about 45 grains found for the later 13-X, 14-X, 15-X and 16-X circulating counterfeit varieties.<sup>14</sup> Based on weight relative to a bona fide shilling and excluding start-up costs for a counterfeiting enterprise, the theoretical profit from a 54.1 grain counterfeit shilling in Massachusetts would be at least 25%  $[(72.0 - 54.1) / 72.0 = 0.25 \times 100 = 25\%]$ . The counterfeiter's actual profit margin may be significantly higher if the silver bullion was sourced, for instance, from illicit clippings of circulating Spanish American coins.

The obverse die of the Salmon 11-X Pine Tree shilling is completely distinct from that of the 10-X, without any features to indicate that one of the obverse dies was derived from the other by re-engraving or other modification. Strong similarities in style of execution of the tree, inner circle elements, and lettering are seen when comparing both varieties to one another, consistent with a common workshop. But the letters are much larger on the 11-X obverse, which also demonstrates a thicker, shorter and more simplified ground line under the tree. The individual inner circle dots are also more robust in configuration on the 11-X obverse design, yet they appear as radially-oriented dashes, similar to the pattern on the 10-X obverse.

When a new coin variety is discovered it is important to classify it properly and in a manner that best reflects its relationship to all known varieties of its series. The Noe classification system lacks the flexibility to logically accommodate newly discovered varieties, whether regular mint issues or circulating counterfeits.<sup>15</sup> Since the new Salmon 11-X Pine Tree shilling is not a modification of an

12. Although not directly attributable to documented seventeenth century find contexts, the rare Salmon 4-X (Noe 17 and 17.5) and 5-X (Noe 18) Oak Tree sixpence may also be circulating counterfeits of seventeenth century origin. The Salmon 3-X Oak Tree sixpence (Noe 15) is no longer considered to be of indeterminate origin. I have had the opportunity to examine it directly in hand. This high-grade coin, which is the sole surviving example of its variety, demonstrates features of a regular mint issue, including unequivocally clear characteristics of rocker press manufacture, and has been re-catalogued among the regular mint issues as Salmon 3-C. The Salmon 2-X (Noe 2-B) New England sixpence is considered a nineteenth century fabrication. For a detailed discussion of the Salmon 13-X, 14-X, 15-X and 16-X Pine Tree shillings see C. J. Salmon (2011) and C. J. Salmon (2010), p. 21.

13. L. Jordan. 2002. p. 54.

14. C. J. Salmon. 2011. p. 3742. This is the weight of a Spanish-American *1-real*. A coin of this weight would thus pass conveniently in commerce alongside the *1-real*, especially in New York, as noted by Mossman. See Mossman (2013), p. 41.

15. C. J. Salmon. 2010. pp. 3-21.

existing die pair variety previously classified by Noe—but rather an entirely new die pairing—it cannot be given an “intermediate” or subsidiary numbering within the Noe classification schema by addending decimal numbers in the manner done, however illogically and unsuitably, by Picker and others. It would (if regarded as a regular mint issue) theoretically need to be given the next available number in succession—following the Noe numbers already given to *all* of the Pine Tree coinage varieties, including all varieties of the large planchet Pine Tree shillings, small planchet Pine Tree shillings, Pine Tree sixpence, and Pine Tree threepence, which are all numbered in a single list—thus taking it out of a logical classification sequence. This is similar to how the later-discovered Noe 38 small planchet Pine Tree shilling was eventually classified. It was first discovered and reported by Robert Vlack, who (because of the strictures imposed by the Noe classification system) was unable to classify it by intercalating it into the Noe listing of the small planchet Pine Tree shillings.<sup>16</sup> Richard Picker then added it to the end of the Noe listing of all Pine Tree coinage (following the threepence and thus not among the other small planchet shillings where it logically belonged), resulting in an unfortunate, yet unavoidable, discontinuity in classification.<sup>17</sup> Because of the inherent rigidity of the received Noe classification system Walter Breen declined to give a Noe designation to a new small planchet Pine Tree shilling die variety that he discovered,<sup>18</sup> choosing instead to name it 15-Q according to the obverse and reverse die designations of the more amenable nineteenth century Crosby classification. It is currently catalogued within a consistent and revised classification as Salmon 9-D. This newer classification system names all regular mint issues according to their obverse and reverse dies, as Crosby did originally. Circulating counterfeits and coins of either dubious or indeterminate origin are listed separately—similar to how Noe chose to isolate and exclude circulating counterfeits or later fabrications from his list of numbered varieties—and appended with an X. It is important to note thus that a circulating counterfeit is not properly given a regular “Noe number” designation under Noe’s classification model as he designed and intended it. This proviso certainly applies in the current case.

The new Salmon 11-X Pine Tree shilling is an important and historically significant variety, a circulating counterfeit datable to the late seventeenth century (and thus possibly a *true* contemporary counterfeit, produced concurrent with the regular issues of the Massachusetts Mint), as evidenced by the find context of its clearly-related counterpart, the Salmon 10-X (Noe 12) Pine Tree shilling.

16. R. A. Vlack. 1967. p. 175.

17. R. Picker. 1967. p. 187.

18. W. Breen. 1961. p. 17.

Documented circulating counterfeits from this early period are decidedly rare,<sup>19</sup> with only these two varieties known with reasonable certitude<sup>20</sup> and with each represented by a single exemplar. The other Pine Tree shilling circulating counterfeits are more common, though still scarce, and appear to have been produced later, with several evidently dating from the mid to late eighteenth century. The most important and well-studied of these, all related stylistically, are the Salmon 13-X, 14-X, 15-X, and 16-X Pine Tree shillings. Examples of the Salmon 16-X variety have been found to be overstruck on 1-reale undertypes dating as late as 1781. Gary Trudgen has argued convincingly that these coins may be products of Machin's Mills.<sup>21</sup>

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19. Mossman, in his authoritative work on counterfeiting in the Colonial period, noted a corresponding paucity of documented early instances of counterfeiting of Massachusetts Silver coins in the historical record, citing only a 1680 conviction in New York City of two New Jersey residents for "Coyning of ffalse Boston money" and a 1683 judgement against three individuals in Philadelphia for counterfeiting New England shillings and other coins. Recorded cases after the late seventeenth century date mainly from the mid- to late eighteenth century. P. Mossman. 2013. pp. 43-44.

20. See n. 12 above.

21. G. A. Trudgen. 1984.

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## Newman Sale Uncovers New Rubber Lady Family Varieties

KAYLA SCHLEMMER (LILBURN, GEORGIA)<sup>1</sup>

The loss of any numismatic researcher is a sad event. When the loss is of a beloved and advanced researcher for over three generations—Eric P. Newman—the loss is overwhelming for the coin collecting community. However, when the collections of these numismatic giants are sold, new discoveries can be found in series that have been overlooked. The Heritage Auction of Eric P. Newman's counterfeit halfpence collection<sup>2</sup> afforded a great opportunity for acquiring rare and unusual counterfeit British and Irish halfpence and farthings. Some of these coins have been documented in articles written by Mr. Newman, but many were largely unknown to collectors outside of this specialty area.<sup>3</sup> The British and Irish counterfeit coppers were generally ignored by the larger coin collecting community until recently, due to the lack of a systematic classification of the coins. However, now a guide for these coins is available which divides the coins into related groupings

1. Special thanks are due to Roger Moore and Jeff Rock for their kind reviews and editing of this paper.

2. Heritage Auction of Eric P. Newman Collection, Part XI, US Coins Signature Auction 1283, November 7 and 10, 2018.

3. E. P. Newman. 1988. “Were Counterfeit British Style Halfpence Dated 1785 Made Specifically for American Use?” *Museum Notes* 33, The American Numismatic Society, pp. 205–23. E. P. Newman. 1976. “American Circulation of English and Bungtown Halfpence,” *Studies on Money in Early America*, pp. 134–72.

called Families.<sup>4</sup> One such Family called the “Rubber Lady Family” was previously described in 2012<sup>5</sup> and later expanded upon. The members of this Family are all very odd and rare. However, the Newman auction had the distinction of having four Rubber Lady counterfeit halfpence, and these coins have shed new light on the engravers and minters of these coppers. I was fortunate in securing all four of these coins. As with most of the counterfeit copper Families, the final word has not been written about them. By obtaining the Newman Rubber Lady coins I have made a significant observation about their engraving process, which has ramifications for other Families.

The Rubber Lady Family currently consists of four obverses and six reverses, which produced nine known die combinations. The reverses are dated 1761, 1769, 1771, and 1776 with three British Britannia reverses and one Irish harp reverse. The obverses include three British King George III and one British King George II styles. The four mentioned Newman Rubber Lady coins provide some interesting additions to our knowledge of this family.

#### Two 3A-69A RUBBER LADY VARIETIES IN LOT 15531

The lot description was:

1769 “Rubber Lady” Pair, Variety 3a-69A. These two examples are from the same die pair that is part of the “Rubber Lady” family, so-named for the elastic appearance of Britannia’s arms and legs. Both examples are pleasing VF pieces with attractive brown surfaces. A depression at the center of the obverse on one example is also seen on the plate coin in Contemporary Counterfeit Halfpenny & Farthing Families.

Noticeable differences between these two coins were immediately apparent despite both being listed as 3a obverses. The designation of 3a or 3b should be explained. The number 3 indicates the third obverse in the Family. The “a” or “b” indicates whether the coin was minted with the die as initially engraved—“a”—or minted with a re-engraved die—“b”. If the die had been changed in a dramatic way, it would have been given a separate obverse number, but in this case most of the die was undisturbed with the modification. The two coins from this lot are shown in Figure 1-A and 1-B. The coin in Figure 1-A has fine, downward-sloping hair, while coin in Figure 1-B has coarser hair which is brushed to the back of the head.

4. R. Moore et al. 2018. *Contemporary Counterfeit Half Penny and Farthing Families*. Colonial Coin Collectors Club (C4).

5. R. Moore and J. Rock. 2012. “Rubber Lady, A Family of Counterfeit Halfpence,” *Colonial Newsletter* 149, pp. 3910–18.



Figure 1. Two Rubber Lady Family members from lot 15531 in the Heritage auction (A) showing fine, down-sloping hair, and (B) showing courser hair.

Only Coin B has a double “V” in GEORGIVS. It is apparent that both of these dies are directly related to variety 3a, as imaged in the *Contemporary Counterfeit Book* (second printing) (Fig. 2). One will note that the style of the hair of the 3a imaged coin corresponds to the hair in the Newman coin in Figure 1-B. Of interest the more recent plating of the 3a variety (*Contemporary Counterfeit Book*, second edition) had the fine hair shown in Figure 1-A, so no distinction was noted between these two by previous authors.

On further examination one will note that the fine hair seen in the Newman coin in Figure 1-A is evident under the coarse hair in the Newman coin in Figure



3a

3b

Figure 2. At left, the obverse of the Rubber Lady obverse 3a plated in *Contemporary Counterfeit Coppers* showing the same hair as seen in the Newman coin, illustrated as the bottom image in Figure 1-B, a coin that was called 3b, but which has a decidedly different engraved ribbon bow.

1-B. This strongly points to the sequence of die modification with the thin-haired coin in Figure 1-A being minted first followed by a revision of the die and minting of the variety shown in Figure 1-B. Also note the leaves of the laurel wreath in the hair in Figure 1-B are blurred, suggesting die failure as the reason for the re-engraving of the hair in the die. The coin in Figure 1-B has the hair closer to the legend lettering, suggesting the fine hair was engraved over with coarser hair.

One quandary now is how to label this significant change in the obverse die from re-engraving. The difference between the 3a and 3b on the plate in *Contemporary Counterfeit Coppers* is obvious with the ribbons at the back of the hair of King George III being very different, and a difference in the shape of the nose (Fig. 2). This indicates that there was die re-engraving between 3a and 3b, but we now have a third die alteration that occurs between these two die modifications. Since the labeling of the plates in previous works establishes the specific label 3a and 3b for the two plated coins (Moore et al. 2018 and Moore and Rock 2012), changing the labeling of these two coins now would only lead to confusion in the future. On the other hand, giving the intermediate die state a label of 3c is also confusing since it implies that the newly discovered intermediate die state is actually the third die modification, which is definitely incorrect. Therefore, the Newman coin shown in Figure 1-A will retain the label of 3a, while the new intermediate die state shown in Figure 1-B will be called 3ab. If further intermediate and different die modifications are found, the indicated approach to labeling will have to be

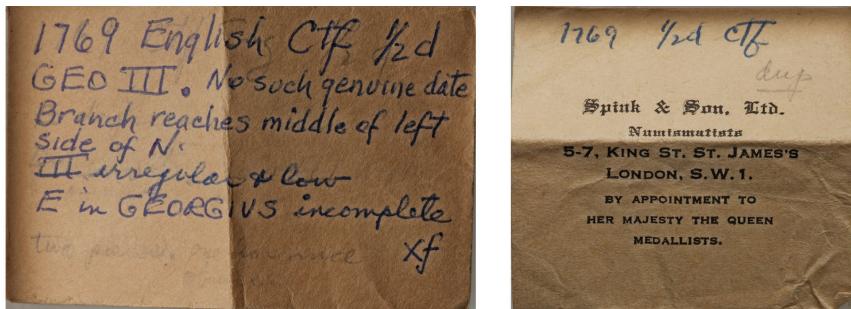


Figure 3. Envelope accompanying lot 15540.

reassessed. The envelopes that accompanied the 1769 Newman coins are shown in Figure 3. Another question to be asked is at what point does a recut die produce a coin which should be considered a new variety, rather than a re-engraved modification? This issue has come up in other series as well. New Jersey Coppers once had a 78 obverse (a Running Fox variety) which has been delisted as a different die and now is simply considered a later die state of the 77 obverse. It would seem that the same applies to the Rubber Lady Family obverse die 3 where each modification did not change most of the original die engraving and therefore does not require providing a new variety label. Clashing, cuds, die cracks, and spalling all create die states. New die varieties are due to die cutting, which is extensive enough to alter the fundamental look of the original die.

Another interesting observation is the occurrence of a central pit in the obverse of the Newman coin shown in Figure 1-B. This central pit is also seen on the obverse of the 3a plate coin shown in Figure 2 but in a slightly different location from the Newman coin. The pit has been noted on other Rubber Lady varieties and is found on the reverse of the Newman 3a coin shown in Figure 1-A. This pit is known to occur on other Rubber Ladies and has been found on both obverses and reverses. The pit could have been made purposely as post-strike damage to the coins or it could have been a natural part of the planchet, as a prestrike anomaly. Discussions on an internet blog dedicated to research into the counterfeit British and Irish coppers has suggested that the planchets used for these counterfeits were not normal coin blanks but blanks intended to become buttons and the pit was the location used to attach a shank.<sup>6</sup> It is impossible that the pit was due to an elevation on the die, unlike the small central dots that can be seen on many counterfeit coins and which occurred during placement of scribe lines for legends. The central dot for the scribe lines was sunk into the die and produced an elevated rather than sunken central dot on the coin.

6. Yahoo based internet group: British-Irishcoppers@yahoogroups.com.



Figure 4. Rubber Lady from lot 15040 from the Newman auction, there attributed as variety 1-76A.

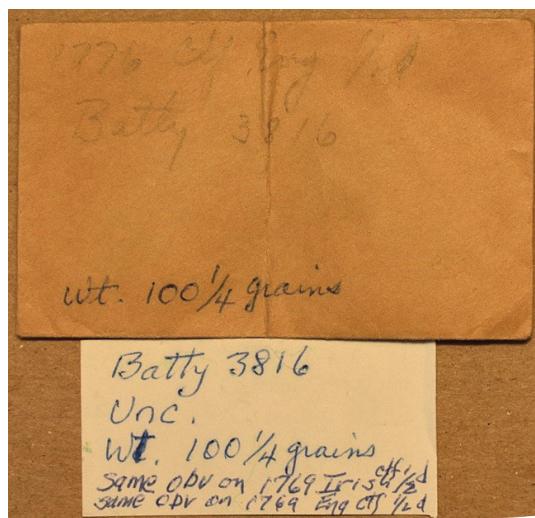


Figure 5. Newman envelope from lot 15040 from the Newman auction.

#### TWO 1-76A RUBBER LADY VARIETIES IN LOTS 15040 AND 15555

The obverse 1 of the Rubber Lady Family has a distinctive look to King George III and was initially called a “Pinhead.” Mike Ringo with tongue in cheek suggested we name the variety a Clemhead after Clem Schettino, an avid collector of counterfeit coppers; but with the discovery of many related Family members without the distinctive obverse, the name Rubber Lady Family was established.<sup>7</sup> The coin

7. Moore and Rock 2012.



Figure 6. Rubber Lady from lot 15055 from the Newman auction, there attributed as variety 1-76A.

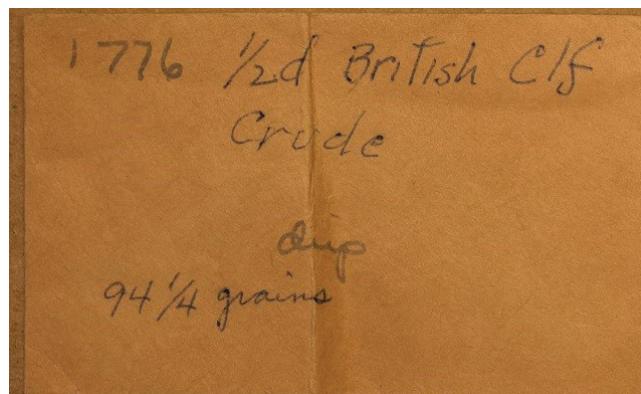


Figure 7. Newman envelope from lot 15055 from the Newman auction.

from Newman Lot 15040 is shown in Figure 4, and the lot included a Newman envelope labeling the coin as uncirculated (Fig. 5). What is fascinating about this coin is the lack of robe lines above the legs and to the right side of the hip of Britannia. These were added to the die in order to produce the coin in Newman Lot 15055 (Fig. 6). Also missing from the coin in Figure 5 is the “third leg” below the regular legs and the appendage between Britannia’s legs. These were probably intended to represent more of the robe. Therefore the Rubber Lady 1-76A (Fig. 5) is an early mint product before the die was “enhanced” to produce the modified 1-76A (Fig. 6). So now we have two reverses: 76Aa and 76Ab based on the die having been recut. The Newman envelope that came with the modified 1-76A is shown in Figure 7.

### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the Rubber Lady Family coins in the Eric P. Newman Collection, as well as those illustrated in the chapter of the new counterfeit book devoted to this Family, we know that dies were sometimes taken out of service and reworked by an engraver. This could have been done because of die wear or damage, or it could have simply been the engraver's wish to improve his artistry on the final product. This sequence may have been repeated many times until the die was unusable at which point the original engraving was completely lapped away in order to make a new die. Both the 3a, 3ab, and 3b as well as the 76Aa and 76Ab are examples of this process. The Rubber Lady Family seems to have been one with "improving dies" as a characteristic, but other Families of counterfeit coppers also need to be reevaluated based on these observations. The recutting of a single obverse die into dies 3a, 3ab and 3b, and a single reverse die cut into dies 76Aa and 76Ab are examples of this process to be added to the two in the counterfeit book. Given the number of die re-cuttings (at least 7) within the small population, the die cutter who changed these dies might have been actively involved in the minting process. However, we can't be sure that the person who made the original dies was also the same person who recut them. For some reason the coiner must have thought the dies needed improving.

Our knowledge concerning coin production during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has been slowly improving. Jeff Rock has been instrumental in developing theories related to the small cottage industry concept of contemporary counterfeit production.<sup>8</sup> It has been suggested that die cutters could have provided their services to several different counterfeiters on a contract basis—or even sold finished dies to a traveling middleman who would deliver them to mints as needed. Someone at the mint responsible for the Rubber Lady coins may have had the tools and rudimentary engraving skills needed for these minor changes, so they wouldn't necessarily have needed to go back to the original engraver. The counterfeiters sourced planchets from yet another party. Distribution of minted coins was handled by others. New discoveries associated with these counterfeit coppers are being made all the time. The Newman Rubber Lady sales have added a new obverse and a new reverse to the Family. There are many more discoveries to be made in this exciting area of colonial coin collecting.

8. J. Rock. 2016. "An Edinburgh Hoard of Counterfeit British Halfpence: Cottage Industry Coiners", *Colonial Newsletter* 162, p. 4462.

## John Bailey's New York City Mint

GARY A. TRUDGEN (VESTAL, NEW YORK)<sup>1</sup>

During most of the Revolutionary War the British Army occupied New York City, and trade was brought to a standstill, while two major fires destroyed a quarter of the city. When the British evacuated the city on November 25, 1783, it fell into a post-war depression. Six years later, in 1789, the economy began to recover with a flurry of activity as new housing was built for the 29,000 inhabitants and new streets were opened. New York City became the center of the young nation, serving as both a state and national capital with many government officials roaming its streets.

The new federal Constitution went into effect on March 4, 1789, and the first session of Congress convened at New York City's Federal Hall, located on the north side of Wall Street at the head of Broad Street. George Washington, about to become the first president of the new nation, triumphantly entered the city on April 23, 1789, and was escorted to his residence at the Walter Franklin House, on the corner of Cherry Street and Franklin Square. One week later, on April 30, he was inaugurated president on the balcony of Federal Hall. It was a day of celebration; bells were rung, guns fired, and the streets were crowded with people anxious to get a glimpse of their new president. In the evening the city

1. The author would like to thank Dave Bowers, Erik Goldstein, Christopher McDowell, Jeff Rock, Jim Rosen, and Vicken Yegparian for editing this article and making suggestions for improvement. All photos are by the author unless otherwise credited.

was ablaze with lights and illuminations and for two hours, from 8 to 10 PM, a spectacular display of fireworks attracted the attention of everyone.

In the midst of the jubilation, a monetary crisis was brewing, a crisis towards which John Bailey, a prosperous cutler, had unknowingly contributed. Known by later historians as the Coppers Panic of 1789, copper coins, primarily consisting of counterfeit English and Irish halfpence, ceased to be accepted by many merchants because the market had become flooded with coppers that were substantially below the authorized weight of the genuine issues. The majority of the counterfeit coppers were imported into this country from England, but some were produced locally. One of the first problems the new government had to address was the creation of a regulated money supply in order to drive out the bad currency.

#### LETTER TO PRESIDENT GEORGE WASHINGTON

Before the war, John Bailey had operated a large cutlery business in New York City, across from the Merchants Coffee House at the Sign of the Cross Swords. When the British Army took control of the city during the war, Bailey, like many patriots, fled into the country. Upon returning to the city in 1783, Bailey found that the lease had expired on the building where his shop and residence were located.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, he had to search for a new location and purchased a residence in the marine district at No. 22 Little Dock Street.<sup>3</sup> Bailey also rented and then purchased, in 1785, a building across the street at No. 21 Little Dock Street from Nicholas Jones<sup>4</sup> that he used for his workshop and storefront.<sup>5</sup> From his residence in April of 1790, he wrote the following letter to President Washington.<sup>6</sup>

2. Trudgen, Gary A., "John Bailey's Shop Across from the Merchants Coffee House," *The Colonial Newsletter*, October 1990, (TN-134), p. 1187.

3. An ad concerning this property in *Rivington's New-York Gazette*, January 8, 1783, states that "The largeness and conveniency of the house, together with the goodness of the stand for business, is sufficient to recommend it." The property was a water lot, measuring 80 feet deep by 16 feet wide, and was located on the south side of the street. After moving his residence across the street in 1791 to his workshop, Bailey sold this property on February 1, 1792, to Anthony L. Bleecker, a broker and auctioneer, for £1100. Land and Property Conveyances of the City and County of New York, Liber 48, page 173.

4. Nicholas Jones was a gentleman who owned a large estate in Bloomingdale, seven miles north of the city. The British Army devastated his estate during the war by taking 700 trees from his property for fuel in New York City.

5. As the city's population grew after the war, new streets were opened and existing streets were merged together, re-numbered, and re-named. In 1792, the street number of Bailey's workshop was changed to No. 20 and two years later Little Dock Street was merged with Water Street and the property address became No. 60 Water Street.

6. *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 5, 16 January 1790–30 June 1790, ed. Dorothy Twohig, Mark A. Mastromarino, and Jack D. Warren. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996, pp. 334–37.

*New York—Little dock Street No. 22*

*Sir,*

*April 17th 1790*

*I have witnessed an application made to Congress by a person residing in Great Britain who wishes to undertake the supply of a copper coinage—I shall not call in question the superiority of his apparatus and process for coining—tho' I must insist that a coinage can be executed as well in America and cheaper to the United states than if executed abroad—Had the applicant given the result of one hours work by the steam engine I should have been enabled to have drawn a comparison between his process and my own—I have actually struck at the rate of 56 coins in a minute—coins in every respect equal to the Specimens which that artist hath transmitted to Congress.*

*I am acquainted with the whole mystery of Coining in gold in silver in Copper or in Billon—I can make my tools as well as prepare the metals, and can undertake to furnish coin in a state of as high perfection as has yet been issued by any nation. I can not only do this but am disposed to undertake it whenever the general government shall establish a mint, if I am called upon by you for that purpose—and I have at this moment in my possession as complete an apparatus for coining as was as yet ever used in any part of Europe that I am acquainted with.*

*Sir, you may perhaps do me the honor of recollecting me, during the late war I resided at Fredricksburg and at Fish-kill as a Cutler and was often favored with your commands.*

*Trusting you will bear this application in mind and if on a full enquiry into my abilities you should be pleased to consider it as advancing the interest of the United States to employ me in furnishing this country with coin, I shall, never, I trust give you a moments cause of inquietude or dissatisfaction. In the mean time I remain with respectful esteem Sir Your very humble and Most Obedient Servant*

*John Bailey<sup>7</sup>*

Bailey's letter is very revealing and strongly suggests that he had connections within the American Congress. Initially he stated that he "witnessed an application made to Congress by a person residing in Great Britain..." who desired a copper coinage contract with the American government. The person in Great Britain was Matthew Boulton and the person submitting the application was John Hinkley Mitchell. Mitchell was from Charleston, South Carolina, and was act-

7. See the Appendix for a copy of the original letter.



Figure 1. 1788 pattern halfpenny (enlarged) struck from dies engraved by Jean Pierre Droz. Photo: Heritage CICF Signature Sale 3024, Lot 24228.

ing as Boulton's agent. Mitchell met Boulton though his mother's family while he was in England completing his education.<sup>8</sup> Boulton was in partnership with James Watt, who invented an improved steam engine in 1781, and was in the process of converting his Soho Mint, near Birmingham, over to steam power.

The application was accompanied by sample specimens, coined by Boulton. It is said that when Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson saw the sample coins he immediately knew that the dies had been engraved by Jean Pierre Droz, a Swiss inventor and engraver. Earlier, while in France in December 1786, Jefferson along with Boulton and Watt had met Droz at the Paris Mint which was located in the Hotel de la Monnaie. Droz was demonstrating his invention of a segmented coining collar that closed around the edge of a planchet as it was struck and then opened afterwards for easy removal of the coin.

At this time, Boulton was attempting to obtain a copper coinage contract from his country and hired Droz to engrave dies and provide plans for his improved stamping press.<sup>9</sup> Droz proved to be a troublesome employee, however, and Boulton got little in return for his money. After much badgering, Droz did engrave dies for a pattern halfpenny that was struck at the Soho Mint in 1788 and given to the British government as samples of what they could expect if Boulton was awarded a contract. As revealed by a letter from Mitchell to Thomas Tudor

8. Taxay, Don, *The U. S. Mint and Coinage*, ARCO Publishing Company, Inc., 1966, Chapter 4, p. 39.

9. Doty, Richard, *The Soho Mint and Industrialization of Money*, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, 1998, pp. 26–45.

Tucker,<sup>10</sup> the sample coins that were given to the American Congress were the same 1788 pattern halfpence (Fig. 1).<sup>11</sup>

As mentioned, Bailey was well informed because he knew who the applicant in England was and his capabilities. Consequently, Bailey was not about to question the “superiority of his [Boulton’s] apparatus and process for coining...” but instead argued “a coinage can be executed as well in America and cheaper....” Bailey then made a questionable boast that he had struck “coins in every respect equal to the Specimens which that artist hath transmitted to Congress.” Apparently he was discounting the skill of the die engraver since few people could match Droz’s engraving artistry. Also, since Boulton’s specimens were struck with a collar, he was saying that he also had the capability to strike coins using a retaining collar. Contained within the brag, Bailey made a rather specific claim that he could strike coins at the rate of 56 per minute. This is very high for a manually operated screw press which suggests that if the statement was true, Bailey’s stamping press was automated in some way. In contrast, Boulton stated that he struck coins at the rate of 55 per minute with an early version of his steam powered stamping press in July 1789.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps Bailey was exaggerating, but his boast does suggest he had obtained state-of-the-art machinery for his mint. In fact, further down in his letter to Washington he boasts that he has “at this moment in my possession as complete an apparatus for coining as was as yet ever used in any part of Europe that I am acquainted with.” One has to wonder where Bailey obtained his coining machinery. Did he import it or have it cast and constructed at a local foundry?<sup>13</sup>

10. Thomas Tudor Tucker (1745–1828) was from Charleston, South Carolina, and served in the United States House of Representatives and later as Treasurer of the United States.

11. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Volume 16: November 1789 to July 1790*, John H. Mitchell to Thomas Tudor Tucker, Charleston, South Carolina, March 22, 1790. Mitchell states: “a friend in England [Boulton], the purport of which was to request of me to send the Congress a few specimens of some coins he had made as a specimen for a copper coinage for the British Government....” Boulton also struck 1790-dated pattern halfpence in January 1790 that were engraved by Droz, but these came too late to be the coins laid before the American Congress. Boulton had shipped the sample coins to Mitchell in November 1789.

12. Doty, p. 39.

13. The New-York Air Furnace, a nearby foundry operated by Peter T. Curtenius, manufactured two stamping presses for the Copper Mint Co. in New Haven, Connecticut, in late 1787 that were used to strike Fugio coppers. This foundry, which was badly damaged during the late war, did not resume business until October 1787 making it unlikely that Bailey obtained his coinage machinery from this firm since it is believed he struck pattern coinage to present to the New York Legislature in February of that year. See Gary A. Trudgen, “The New-York Air Furnace,” *The Colonial Newsletter*, April 2017, pp. 4537–40.



Figure 2. Brasher Doubloon (enlarged). Yale University specimen. Photo: PCGS CoinFacts.

Yet another interesting aspect of the letter is Bailey's statement that he is "acquainted with the whole mystery of Coining in gold in silver in Copper or in Billon."

**Coining in gold:** It is likely that Bailey already had experience striking gold coins. Ephraim Brasher, Jr. and John Bailey both worked as cutlers in New York City before the American Revolution making it almost certain that they knew each other well before they became interested in coinage after the war ended.<sup>14</sup> The two associates would have no need for separate mints making it probable that the famous New York and Lima-style doubloons were struck at Bailey's mint from dies engraved and signed by Brasher (Fig. 2).

**Coining in silver:** No silver coins have been traced to Bailey. Nevertheless, we know he had a great deal of experience working with silver since he used that metal for the hilts and scabbard mountings of hunting swords, also called cuttoes, that he made and sold. John Bailey's daughter, Charlotte, recounted that he had "a small mahogany box, into which, it is said were thrown much silver coin<sup>15</sup> as might be received in payment and which metal, as scarce an article then as now, was worked up in the mountings and decorations of the sword and sheaths."<sup>16</sup> Figure 3 presents a typical scabbard throat band that Bailey engraved with his name in script and location of manufacture in type.

14. Bailey is best known for fabricating one of George Washington's cuttoes, while Brasher is best known for the cuttoe he made for Ethan Allen, the popular and controversial leader of Vermont's Green Mountain Boys.

15. As stated by Bailey's daughter, silver coins were very scarce during the war. The coins that Bailey managed to collect were probably from a wide range of countries and no doubt consisted of Spanish-American silver, such as eight *reales* and its lesser denominations, plus a mix of other silver coins that may have even included pine tree shillings from Massachusetts.

16. Greenwood, Isaac J., "Memoir of John Bailey and the War Sword of Washington," Manuscript, New-York Historical Society, 1864.



Figure 3. Signed silver scabbard throat band from Washington's silver and ivory hilted cuttoe. Photo: mountvernon.com.

**Coining in copper:** On February 12, 1787, Bailey and Brasher petitioned the New York Legislature for a grant to coin copper for the state.<sup>17</sup>

“The several petitions of John Bailey and Ephraim Brasher, relative to the Coinage of Copper within the state were read, and referred to Mr. Brooks, Mr. Galatian, and Mr. Duboys.”

The preceding Assembly journal entry leaves it unclear if they petitioned separately or in unison. However, study of the coins that are attributed to the duo through punch linkage and artistic engraving style indicates that their petitions were in unison.

Two types of 1787-dated coppers that are attributed to Bailey and Brasher are believed to have been submitted to the New York Legislature as sample specimens for a state coinage. They are the Nova Eborac<sup>18</sup> [4 varieties] and Excelsior<sup>19</sup> [3 varieties] coppers which were struck from dies using the same legend and date puncheons as Brasher’s New York doubloon (Figs. 4 and 5). Furthermore, these two coinages are tied together by an artistic engraving style where the human elbow appears elongated as though something is hung around it. The engraver, in

17. *Journal of the Assembly of the State of New-York, Tenth Session, 1787.*

18. It is believed that only the Small Head and Large Head Nova Eborac coppers were struck as patterns for submission to the New York Legislature. The Reverse Figure Left and Reverse Figure Right varieties were struck later in large numbers, for unknown reasons, and circulated extensively as shown by considerable wear on most extant specimens.

19. In addition to the Excelsior dies attributed to John Bailey there is an Excelsior obverse die attributed to James F. Atlee which is found married with the George Clinton and Standing Indian coppers.



Figure 4. Nova Eborac, Large Head (enlarged).



Figure 5. Excelsior, Eagle Left (enlarged). Photo: PCGS CoinFacts.

actuality, was depicting a large cuff on a mid-length sleeve, although some dies show little evidence of the sleeve.<sup>20</sup>

Two types of counterfeit coppers, both dated 1787, were also struck in Bailey's mint. They are the "Muttonhead" Connecticut copper<sup>21</sup> [2 varieties] and the

20. Trudgen, Gary A., "The Nova Eborac Coppers," *The Colonial Newsletter*, September 1991, p. 1263. See this reference for photos showing the subject artistic engraving style.

21. Trudgen, Gary A., "The Mysterious Muttonhead," *Bowers & Merena, Rare Coin Review*, No. 63, winter 1986/7, pp. 74-5. The Muttonhead Connecticut copper shares the same elbow attribute as the Nova Eborac and Excelsior coppers along with many style similarities of the central devices of the Small and Large Head Nova Eborac coppers.



Figure 6. CT Muttonhead, Miller 1.2-C. Enlarged.



Figure 7. Group 2 Atlee Halfpenny, Vlack 17-87A. Enlarged.

Group 2 Atlee halfpence [4 varieties] (Figs. 6 and 7).<sup>22</sup> These two coinage types were unauthorized versions of coppers then in circulation. Since copper coins were not legal tender at this time, the coiners could mint them with impunity.

The final copper coinage produced at Bailey's mint was the 1788-dated "running fox" New Jersey coppers [5 varieties] (Fig. 8). When Walter Mould, a counterfeiter from Bristol, England, moved into New York City after the British Army evacuated it in November 1783, Bailey financially backed him. Later when Mould obtained a contract to coin coppers for the State of New Jersey, he had difficulty

22. The Group 2 Atlee Halfpence share the same date and legend punches as the Brasher Doubloon, Nova Eborac, and Excelsior coppers, which are attributed to John Bailey.



Figure 8. NJ copper, Maris 75-bb (enlarged).

meeting his obligation to the state and he turned to Bailey for help at the end of the contract period.<sup>23</sup>

**Coining in billon:** Billon is an alloy consisting of copper combined with a small amount of silver.<sup>24</sup> Congress considered the use of billon for its cent, instead of copper, because of its higher intrinsic value in order to reduce the physical size and weight of that denomination. However, Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton in his “Report on the Mint” vetoed the idea saying it would lead to extensive counterfeiting.<sup>25</sup> It is believed that Bailey did not use this metal for sample coinage or in his other work. The fact that Bailey mentioned billon again indicates that he was privy to the discussions in Congress concerning a national coinage.

In his letter Bailey states “I can make my tools as well as prepare the metals....”

23. Trudgen, Gary A., “Walter Mould—Convicted Felon,” *Journal of Early American Numismatics*, American Numismatic Society, December 2018, pp. 1–18. When Walter Mould died in the spring of 1789, after moving to Kentucky, John Bailey, as his creditor, was assigned the task of administering the remainder of his estate in New York City.

24. Billon had been used for limited coinage in Europe; to a large extent in France for *mousquetaires* (1709–1713) and *sous marqués* (1738–1764).

25. Harold C. Syrett et al., eds. *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*. 27 vols. New York, 1961–87, Vol. 7, p. 603. Hamilton wrote: “In France, the composition, which is called billon, has consisted of one part silver and four parts copper; according to which proportion, a cent might contain seventeen grains; defraying out of the material the expence (sic) of coinage. The conveniency of size is a recommendation of such a species of coin; but the Secretary is deterred from proposing it, by the apprehension of counterfeits.-The effect of so small a quantity of silver, in, comparatively so large a quantity of copper, could easily be imitated by a mixture of other metals of little value, and the temptation to do it would not be inconsiderable.”

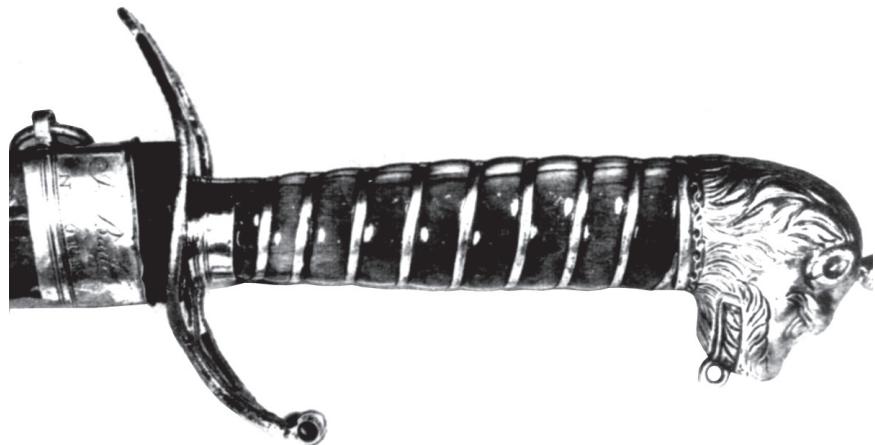


Figure 9. Lion's head pommel on a hunting sword manufactured by John Bailey, ca. 1770.

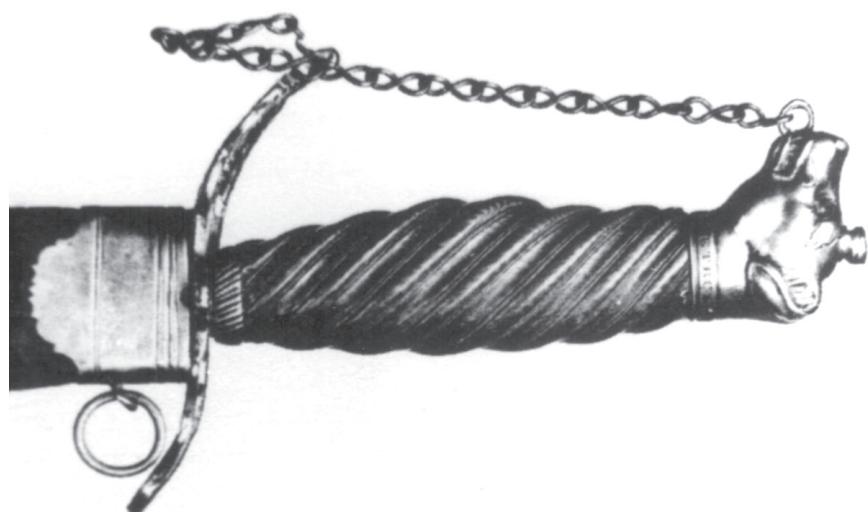


Figure 10. Dog head's pommel on the hilt of a sword made by Ephraim Brasher, ca. 1775–1785.

**Make my tools:** Bailey is saying that he can make his own puncheons and dies. Some numismatists have speculated that puncheons may have been readily available for purchase from commercial sources, and die engravers had no need to prepare their own letter and numeral punches. Bailey's statement seems to contradict this thinking, suggesting that commercially available puncheons at this time were only available in limited circumstances from regional vendors.<sup>26</sup> Even in England, when Matthew Boulton hired die engraver Jean Pierre Droz, he stipulated that Droz was to fabricate his own punches for the intended copper coinage.<sup>27</sup>

Bailey was capable of engraving his own central device punches and preparing coinage dies, as revealed by his artistic ability in working with metal when he fabricated swords. He often included a cast and engraved lion's head pommel on the hilts of his swords (Fig. 9), which illustrates a finely worked silver pommel and green-stained ivory grip wrapped with silver wire. Ephraim Brasher possessed the same artistic capability with metal (Fig. 10), presenting a superbly worked silver dog's head pommel set with amethyst eyes.

**Prepare the metals:** In order to prepare metals to meet the specified fineness as directed by Congress they would be assayed to determine their composition. To accomplish this, Bailey is saying that he or an employee was familiar with the various techniques then in use for assaying metals. Once the metal is of the proper composition, it would be made into ingots. The ingots are then repeatedly rolled and annealed to the desired thickness of a coin, requiring iron rollers and a furnace. As a cutler, Bailey had a lot of experience in the use of furnaces. Once the metal was of the proper thickness, a manually operated cutting press would be used to produce blanks which were then cleaned and readied for the stamping press.

After emphasizing his abilities as a coiner, Bailey thought it advantageous to remind Washington that he had previously performed work for him during the Revolutionary War by saying "Sir, you may perhaps do me the honor of recollecting me, during the late war I resided at Fredricksburg and at Fish-kill as a Cutler and was often favored with your commands." In 1778, while living at Fishkill, New York, Bailey fabricated a silver mounted hunting sword for Washington which he wore for the remainder of the war. Known today as Washington's silver and ivory hilted cuttoe, it reportedly was one of the general's favorite edged weap-

26. Trudgen, Gary A., "That 'Broken A' Punch," *C4 Newsletter*, Fall 2018, p. 10.

27. Doty, p.40. Boulton required Droz to prepare the master dies and punches to be used in the coinage. Since the central device punches were always the responsibility of the die engraver, Boulton's directive evidently includes the preparation of the necessary letter and numeral puncheons.

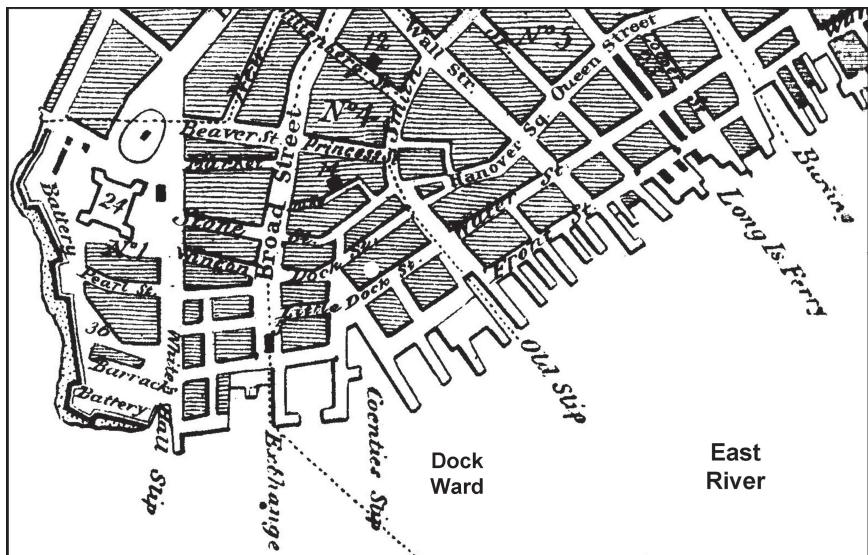


Figure 11. Southeast tip of Manhattan taken from *The City of New York in the Year of Washington's Inauguration 1789* by Thomas E. V. Smith, The Chatham Press, Riverside, Connecticut, 1972. The approximate location of Bailey's mint is shown by the white dot on the north side of Little Dock Street in the double block complex near Smith Street.

ons.<sup>28</sup> While Bailey was at Fredricksburg (now Patterson, New York) and Fishkill, he provided cutlery items for the Continental Army and, at times, according to Bailey's daughter, both General Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette were guests at Bailey's workshop.

Bailey was very confident in his ability to provide a high-quality coinage for the government by saying that he could "undertake to furnish coin in a state of as high perfection as has yet been issued by any nation." He concludes his application by suggesting that Washington do "a full enquiry into my abilities..." and closes by saying to Washington that he will "never, I trust, give you a moments cause of inquietude or dissatisfaction."

#### MINT LOCATION

One item not touched upon in Bailey's letter is the location of his mint. Bailey's daughter related that he was undecided if he wanted to continue in the cutlery

28. Washington's cuttoe resides today in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

trade after finding that his old workshop in the city was no longer available to him. After much thought, he did continue work as a cutler at his new location, but he was open to a change in occupation. Not long after settling into the new location he met Walter Mould, the counterfeiter who was at the center of interest in coinage in the New York metropolitan area. He provided financial backing to Mould, who must have convinced Bailey to try his hand at obtaining a copper coinage contract with the State of New York.

It is almost certain that Bailey set up the mint, probably with some direction from Walter Mould, in his cutlery workshop, located in Dock Ward at No. 21 Little Dock Street. In order to provide a sample coinage for his petition to the New York Legislature on February 12, 1787, Bailey, in all probability, had the mint up and running sometime in 1786. The workshop property measured 70 feet deep by 23 feet 10 inches wide, and was located on the north side of the street.<sup>29</sup> Figure 11 displays a section of a plan of the city at this period of time illustrating the location of Little Dock Street within Dock Ward. Little Dock Street was five blocks long running between Whitehall and Smith streets, while Dock Ward was bounded by the East River, Broad, Wall, and Smith streets. A survey of property numbering on Little Dock Street shows that it started with No. 1 near Smith Street and ended with No. 60 near Whitehall Street. Thus, Bailey's mint was likely located in the double block section on the north side of the street near Smith Street. Bailey had moved to an extremely busy and noisy section of the city. In the rear of his residence, shipping was coming and going along the East River. Stevedores supervised roughneck longshoremen as cargos were unloaded and clattering carts hauled it away. Adding to this commotion was the barking of dogs, squealing of pigs running free, and vendors hawking their wares at the nearby marketplace in the Merchants' Exchange on Broad Street.

### CONCLUSION

John Bailey made one final attempt to catch the ear of the president. On February 5, 1791, he wrote again saying "On the 17th of April last I had the honor to address your Excellency on the Subject of my being employed in a Mint for the United States." He again emphasized that he was well acquainted with the coining business and had the machinery to complete the task. After learning that a federal mint was likely to be established, Bailey declared "Should Your Excellency be Pleased to employ me as Master of the Mint, I make not the Least doubt but I Will

29. Land and Property Conveyances of the City and County of New York, Liber 43, p. 458.

give that satisfaction required in executing the Business With the utmost Fidelity and despatch.”<sup>30</sup>

Bailey's letters to President Washington confirms that he had operated a mint in New York City during the Confederation Period. His confidence that he could satisfy the new nation's coinage needs indicates that he already had gained considerable experience in coinage. It is unknown, however, if Bailey's application for providing a national coinage was given serious consideration. The fiasco that resulted when the old Continental Congress awarded a contract coinage to James Jarvis in 1787 had soured some members of the new federal government against a contract coinage.<sup>31</sup> Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson was strongly opposed to a contract coinage, especially if it was done by another nation. With such notables as Jefferson and Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton lobbying for a federal mint, Bailey's application fell on deaf ears.

Bailey's initial letter to Washington provides some insight into his attitude concerning coinage. He did not hesitate to tell the new government that he owned coinage machinery and had already minted coins. This indicates that, in his mind, he had done nothing illegal even though he had contributed to the Coppers Panic of 1789 by manufacturing his version of underweight copper coins then in circulation.<sup>32</sup> During the Confederation Period there were no New York State laws that specifically prohibited copper coinage within the state and Bailey was obviously aware of this circumstance.<sup>33</sup> The only law concerning copper coinage focused on the importation and passing of counterfeit British halfpence and farthings.

30. *George Washington Papers, Series 7, Applications for Office, 1789–1796: John Bailey*, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mgw757999/>.

31. The coinage issued by Jarvis is known today as Fugio coppers, a name taken from the obverse Latin legend.

32. The authorized weight of an English halfpenny was 152.2 grains, while a Connecticut copper was set at 144 grains. The Nova Eborac coppers were unauthorized and thus no weight was set for these coppers. The average weight of the coppers produced by John Bailey are as follows:

- Nova Eborac Reverse Figure Left: 131 grains (A).
- Nova Eborac Reverse Figure Right: 106 grains (A).
- Group 2 Atlee Halfpence: 114 grains (B).
- Connecticut Muttonhead copper: 131 grains (C).

(A): Trudgen, Gary A., “Nova Eborac Coppers,” pp. 1267–68.

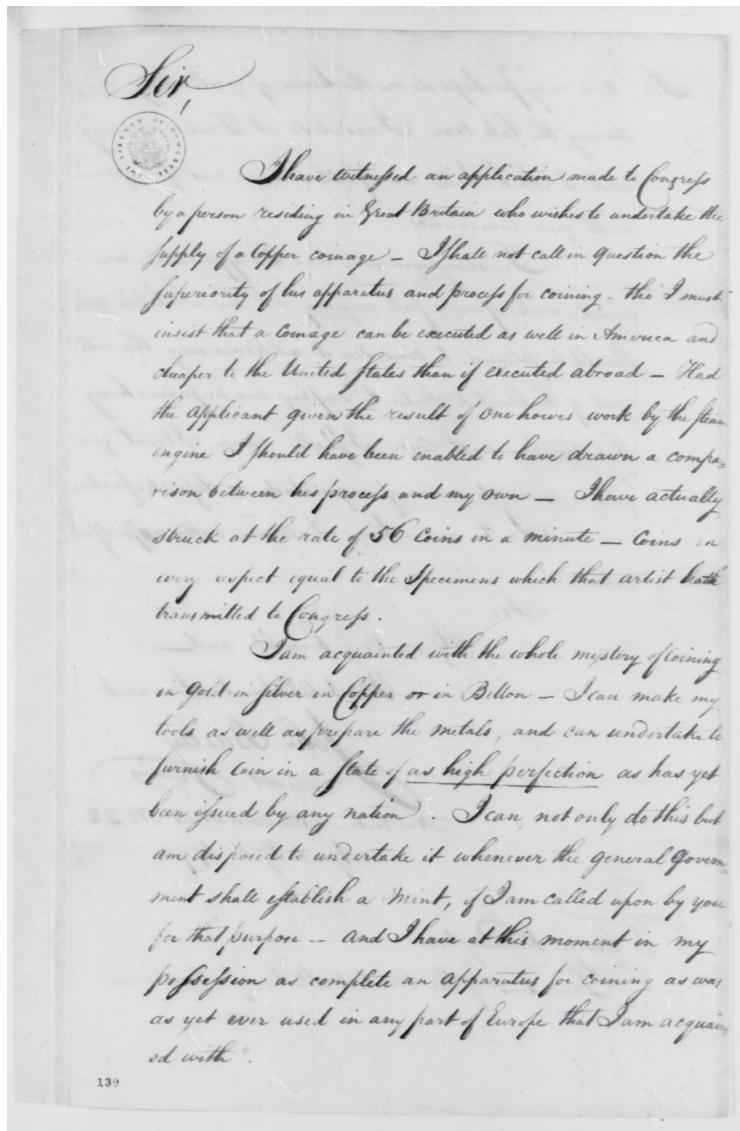
(B): Howes, John, “Machin's Mills Family,” *Contemporary Counterfeit Halfpenny and Farthing Families, Volume One*, Colonial Coin Collectors Club, 2018, p. 168.

(C): Mossman, Philip L., *Money of the American Colonies and Confederation*, The American Numismatic Society, 1992, p. 210.

33. The law on the books in New York State concerning counterfeit coppers was 37 years old in 1790 and was titled *An Act to Prevent the importing or passing Counterfeits of British Halfpence and Farthings*.

John Bailey was ambitious and confident in his own abilities. Although he did not obtain a top spot in the new government, master of the federal mint, he was a talented artisan, good businessman, and successful investor and was well respected by his peers. Trained as a cutler in Sheffield, England, he successfully altered his professional life to keep pace with the changing times in America. When his cutlery business declined after the war he explored possible coinage opportunities; established a bell foundry; a brass foundry; and finally, in his waning years, he did business as a merchant. He manufactured many products (swords, coins, bells, and andirons) that testify to his genius and are highly valued today.

## APPENDIX



Appendix Photos: Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig, eds. *The Diaries of George Washington*. 6 vols. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976-79; a series of *The Papers of George Washington*. Copyright 1976-79 by the Rector and Visitors of University of Virginia. Used by permission of the publisher.

Sir, you may perhaps do me the honor of recollecting me,  
during the late war I resided at Fredericksburg  
and at Fishkill as a fitter and was often favored  
with your commands.

Trusting you will bear this application in  
mind, and if on a full enquiry into my abilities you  
should be pleased to consider it as advancing the in-  
terest of the United States, to employ me in furnishing  
this country with Coin, I shall, never, I trust give  
you a moments cause of inquietude or dissatisfaction

In the mean time I remain with respectful  
esteem

Sir

Your very humble and  
most Obedient Servt

John Bailey

New York - Little Dock Street No. 22

April 17th 1790

To George Washington  
President of the United States of America

## The Spanish Colonial Mint at Potosí: A Comparative Look

BRIAN R. STICKNEY (EL PASO, TEXAS)

One reason why the 1792 Coinage Act pegged the newly-established U.S. dollar to the Spanish milled dollar<sup>1</sup> was the sheer volume of Spanish colonial coinage on global markets. By the time of American independence,<sup>2</sup> Spain had operated nearly a dozen mints in the Western Hemisphere, several of which had been striking a prodigious number of coins for well over a century. To highlight Spain's dominance regarding the creation of hard money during the Colonial era, it might be useful to focus on just one of the more productive mints from the time English colonists were establishing permanent settlements at Jamestown and Plymouth colonies, circa 1607–1630, through the first century of American independence.

1. The Coinage Act of April 2, 1792, Section 9, reads, in part: "Dollars or units each to be the value of the Spanish milled dollar as the same is now current, and to contain...416 grains of standard silver." 416 grains in the English system translated to 26.96 g; the Spanish milled dollar weighing 27.06 g. The 1792 Coinage Act further defined standard silver to be 0.892 fine; the Spanish dollar being 0.896. Comment continued: One also notes that the Section 1 of the Coinage Act of February 9, 1793, further made gold and silver coins of Spain and its dominions legal tender in the United States "...at the rate of one hundred cents of the dollar..."

2. Spain's mint in Potosí, Upper Peru (Bolivia), for example, produced 4,127,575 pesos (dollars) of silver coinage during 1783, about 87% of which were in eight-real (dollar-sized) coins.



Figure 1. Photo taken from the famous tiled roof of the mint in Potosí with the ever-present Cerro Rico in the background. Image: Dutch Wikipedia, public domain.

Potosí, the mint of choice, located high in the Andes mountains<sup>3</sup> in what is now Bolivia, did not exist prior to 1573. Neither did the city—or even a village—prior to 1545. The location simply was part of the vast, sparsely-populated high plain running throughout the base of mountains dominating the length of western South America. Less than 15 years after the Spaniards succeeded in occupying Peru, an indigenous llama herder, Diego Hualapai, working for Captain Juan de Villarreal, spent all night camped at the base of *Sumac Urdu* (beautiful mountain in the Quechua language). During the night, he noticed the glimmering of light emanating from rocks placed around his camp fire. Upon investigation the next day, Villarreal realized that the refracted light was caused by highly concentrated silver ore, some of which had melted during the night.

Villarreal and two Spanish partners took possession of what would become *Cerro Rico* (rich hill) (Fig. 1) by registering a mining claim. Filing was a relatively easy process whereby the claimant had 30 days to document his request with the local magistrate, simultaneously providing an ore sample. Claims were only good if they were worked. Mines that were abandoned or not active for a year reverted

3. Geographic coordinates: (18°37'06" S by 65°44'59" W); Elevation: city: 13,400 feet; peak: 15,700 feet.



Figure 2. Arms, Villa Imperial Potosí. Source: Lazo, V3, p. 105.

to the public domain. Word of the rich discovery quickly spread and the stampede was on resulting in the founding of the town, Potosí, in 1546. Subsequently, some 600 shafts would honeycomb the mountain registered to over 500 different owners. In 1547, Spain's monarch granted the town royal recognition calling Potosí the *Villa Imperial* with its own coat-of-arms (Fig. 2), Potosí was reported to have a population of some 14,000 housed in 2,500 structures. By 1559 the area around Potosí, *Las Chacaras*, was granted *Audiencia* (provincial) status.<sup>4</sup> By 1570, Potosí was said to have a population of 50,000, nearly all of whom were associated with the mining industry.

Three years later in 1573, Spanish authorities began establishing the mint that was to become one of the most prolific facilities in the New World, which noticeably augmenting economic activity in the region. The mint is believed to have begun operation within two years, facilitated by two fortuitous circumstances. One was the transfer of the short-lived mint established just two years before in La Plata (present-day Sucre). The viceroy in Lima correctly determined that they had

4. Altogether 15 *audiencias* were established by Spain in the western hemisphere during the Colonial period. The first, Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic), was decreed in 1526; the last, Cuzco (Peru) in 1787. *Audiencias* were the first Spanish administrative institutions in the New World to supplant the authority of the conquistadors and firmly administer policies of the monarch.

not erected the new minting facility close enough to the principal source of silver. He took corrective action, transferring the equipment about 50 miles to Potosí. Probably the most significant decision was the designation of Alonso Rincon as Potosí's first assayer, which was the most important technical position in a mint. Rincon, who sometimes doubled as an engraver, was highly competent. He had some 45 years of experience as an assayer. His first appointment was in Spain after which he became the first assayer appointed to the first mint in the Americas at Mexico City in 1535. In 1565 he was transferred to Lima, Peru, to establish a mint there, leaving about 1571 to set up the ill-fated mint in La Plata. Thus, Rincon was the first assayer for four of the Western Hemisphere's first mints in succession, three of which would become quite prolific.

There was one other significant event associated with mining and coining activity that manifested itself nearly simultaneously with the development of the Potosí mint. This was the discovery and development of mercury deposits in Huancavelica, Perú<sup>5</sup> in the mid-1560s, only a few hundred miles from Potosí. Mercury, a rare metal, was key in the mercury amalgamation process for refining silver. This process was vastly more efficient in separating the metal from other impurities, requiring much less coal or wood deposits for firing kilns. This was particularly important in the *alto plano* (high plain), where the average altitude above sea level is just about equal to the timberline. The discovery of mercury deposits was so important that the Crown took direct control of operations; thus, preventing the exploitation of the processing by entrepreneurs who might combine the two industries as a monopoly.

The Potosí mint's operations transformed the region and served as a magnet for further development (Fig. 3). In 1611, Viceroy Montclairos (Lima) ordered the president of the Audiencia Chacaras to take a census to determine the population of Potosí. The result showed that Potosí had transformed itself into the largest population center in the New World with 150,000 inhabitants, many of whom were not of European descent. Not all were Europeans, but quite a few were. Demographically the inhabitants consisted of 66,000 indigenous persons, 40,000 Spaniards from the Peninsula or foreigners, 35,000 Creoles (Spaniards born in the New World), 3,000 Spaniards from Potosí, and 6,000 African slaves.<sup>6</sup> Africans were brought to Potosí to work the mines. Few survived the harsh conditions; those who did were used as domestic servants with a handful being assigned to the mint, mainly working the four ovens used to smelt the silver ore.

The rapid growth of population in Potosí stands in sharp contrast to what transpired in the English colonies. England's first attempt to establish a perma-

5. 12°47' 11" S. by 74°58' 32" W.

6. Gisbert, Seventh Edition, p. 146.

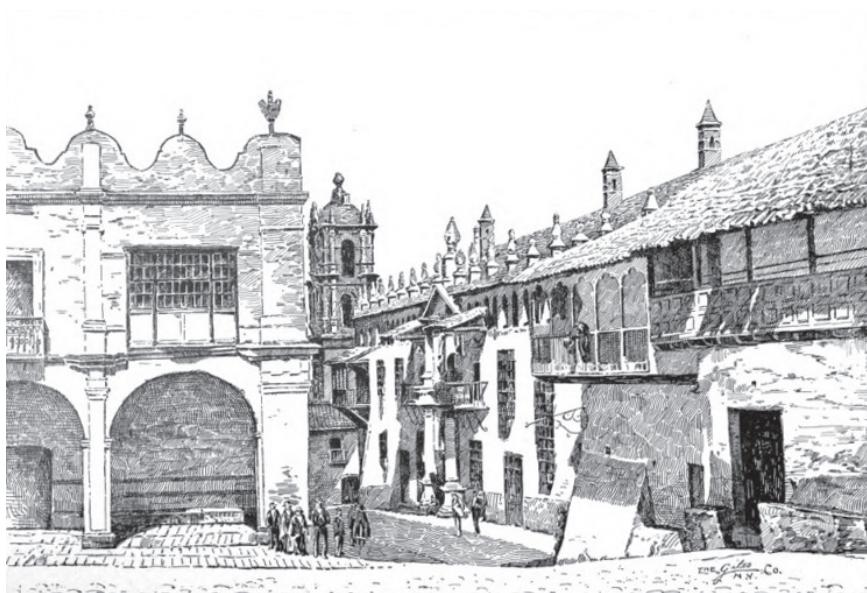


Figure 3. Engraving of the Façade of the Potosí Mint, Center, Backdrop. Source: *International Bureau of American Republics, Bolivian Handbook*, 1893, p. 69.

nent settlement at Roanoke, North Carolina, in 1585 under license granted to Sir Walter Raleigh lasted only about two years, becoming known as the Lost Colony. Several of the colonists abandoned the initiative by returning to England on the first available ship. This included Joachim Gans, who was described as a metallurgist. The first permanent English colony was established in 1607 at Jamestown, licensed by the Virginia Company. But that company struggled mightily, losing about 80% of its first settlers to starvation and exposure before the first resupply ships arrived and, even then, it was temporarily abandoned in 1610. The Plymouth Colony fared little better during its first two or three years. It did manage a toehold, numbering about 300 colonists after 10 years with some 20,000 finally inhabiting the Massachusetts Bay Colony by about 1640.

Records are not clear as to just how much money was coined at Potosí in the earliest years. Potosí's precursor, La Plata, is believed to have operated only a few months, striking about 2,000 marcs of silver (16,000 ounces) in lower denomination coins. This was enough to make some 134,000 *reales*.<sup>7</sup> Anecdotal accounts of

7. Briefly, one marc = eight ounces = 230 g. By instructions of the era, one marc was to yield 67 *reales* of coin. One *real* at the time consisted of 3.43 g of silver, 0.930 fine, later equated to 12.5 cents in U.S. coinage. An eight-real coin (*peso*) at full weight was 27.4 g, close to the U.S. silver dollar.

this era indicate that one *real* was considered a fair wage for a day laborer. Four furnaces are reported to have been brought to Potosí with a combined capacity of smelting up to 4,000 *marcs* of silver weekly. Shortages of other material persisted limiting production by the end of 1574 to about 60,000 *pesos* of coin equal to about 480,000 *reales*. According to Burzio, viceroy Toledo of Lima issued instructions on June 6, 1574, to mint officials in Potosí that, per directives from King Filipe II, they were to coin at least 10,000 marcs of silver per year (83,750 *pesos*) for the account of the Crown. Coining of bullion provided by private parties was separate. Burzio reports that, by 1629, the mint had struck nearly a million *pesos* for the monarch, a considerable sum, but below the annual benchmark. Subsequent data demonstrates that mintage figures were considerably higher when coins struck for individuals were considered.

Carlos Lazo García's three-volume tome is far more complete, beginning in the year 1626 it tabulates daily and/or weekly reports of coinage data by denomination, whether struck for the Crown or private account.<sup>8</sup> In that year, the Potosí mint struck 942,052 *pesos* of coin, 84% of which, by value, consisted of the eight-*real* denomination (roughly dollar equivalent). 11% were four-*reales*. Only 5% (51,000 *pesos*) of the mint's output in 1626 was devoted to the denominations of either one- or two-*reales*. No half-*real* coins were struck that year. The heavily-skewed output of the eight-*real* coin speaks volumes about Spain's priorities. Coinage was produced for storage or transactions by those persons of means. The 51,000 *pesos* of the one- and two-*real* denominations would have been enough to provide only one coin each for the population of Potosí on a per capita basis to facilitate small transactions—hardly robust. By contrast, colonial and post-colonial coinage produced in the English colonies was largely of lower denominations, mostly copper or base metals.

Potosí's output the following year, 1627, leaped to a staggering 2,358,891 *pesos*, 86% of which consisted of the eight-*real* denomination. This roughly translates to an impressive 16 *pesos* per person residing, in and around, Potosí, most of whom were not particularly active in the monied economy.<sup>9</sup> To put this into perspective, according to data in the Annual Report of the Director of the U.S. Mint for the year 1895, tables showing the "stock" of money throughout the United States on a per capita basis is revealing. For 1894, the amount of silver in the United States was \$8.89 per person, about nine *pesos*, equivalent. According to the mint statistics, about 88% of that consisted of coin, about 12% bullion, labeled

8. Vol. 2 contains gross annual coinage data for the period of 1600–1625; Vol. 3 is totally devoted to detailed tables, providing the daily and/or weekly recordings of minting activity, by denomination.

9. Parenthetically, Potosí struck very little gold, beginning only in 1778.

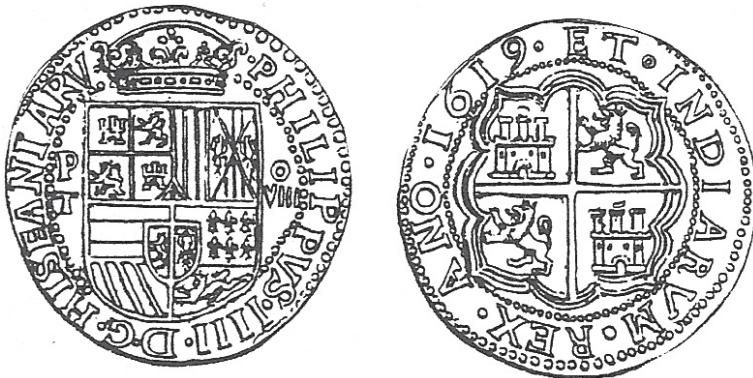


Figure 4. Spanish Colonial coins from Potosí did not incorporate dates until 1617, located on the perimeter of the upper-left quadrant on the reverse. Before that, approximate dates could be ascribed based on the assayer's initial appearing on the obverse, 9 o'clock position, left of shield (T in this case).

“limited tender” But that amount constitutes the net build up or stock of silver and coin after U.S. mints had been operating for a century. The salient point is, in the single year of 1627, the Potosí mint produced twice the amount of silver coin, per capita, as that found in the United States in 1894. Granted, we are talking about two entirely different population sizes, e.g., 150,000 for Potosí as compared to 70 million in the United States. But we are also comparing coinage output of one year for Potosí as opposed to a century of production in the United States.

What about other countries? In 1894, France had the world's highest stock of silver on a per capita basis reported to be \$12.94, according to the U.S. mint's annual report. Interestingly, nearly 12% of its silver stock was identified as bullion, about the same as the United States. The per capita stock of silver for the Netherlands was \$11.96; Switzerland was \$5.00; Germany \$4.20; India \$3.21; England \$2.96; and Japan \$2.05. Potosí, for its time, was probably the richest city on earth.

Other observations might be enlightening. The first year the Philadelphia mint struck more than \$1,000,000 (*pesos*) in silver coinage was 1818 (\$1,070,454.50). Philadelphia did not match Potosí's 1627 silver output until a full two centuries later in 1827, when it struck \$2,869,200 in silver coinage, mostly half dollars. The first year that the combined output of the various U.S. mints was more than one million silver dollars was 1871 (\$1,117,136). Soon after, the U.S. mint's compliance with the Bland-Allison Act of 1878 catapulted the mass production of silver dollars. Ultimately, between the Bland-Allison act and Sherman Silver Purchase Act, the active U.S. mints produced some 570 million silver dollar coins, in a rather

narrow time frame of about 50 years. There is no consensus of Potosí's total output during the colonial period. After 1627, annual output continued to escalate, surpassing three million *pesos* in 1631, four million in 1642, and five million in 1643 and in 1646.

To be fair, one must point out that the period of the 1640s and early 1650s was a particularly difficult period of the Potosí mint. During this time, it was determined that several Spanish mint officials, government representatives, and merchants conspired to debase the fineness of the coinage. This may account for some of the heightened output in the 1640s. As a result, lower denominated coins of the period were withdrawn from circulation, melted, and re-coined. The higher denominations (four- and eight-*real*) were withdrawn, countermarked, and revalued at three-quarters of their nominal value to account for the lower silver content. Several officials were successfully prosecuted with some being executed. Design changes were imposed, and supervision enhanced to restore confidence. Despite the 1652 mint scandal, and associated disruptions, Potosí managed to strike between three and four million *pesos* of coin annually for most of the next 20 years.

So, what was Potosí's total output during the colonial period (1574–1825)? The Bolivian Handbook issued by the International Bureau of American Republics in 1893 devotes much of its country profiling to Bolivia's robust mining sector and associated activities. While they do not cite coinage statistics, *per se*, they indicate that a “variety of sources” determined that Potosí mines produced \$1,532,948,142 worth of silver from 1545–1800. Dr. Adolph Soetbeer,<sup>10</sup> a prominent nineteenth-century German economist, generated global gold and silver production statistics beginning with the discovery and colonization of the New World. A partial table appears below (Table 1). One's attention is drawn to the leap in the average annual silver production for the block of years 1545–1560. The annual average of 2,900,000 ounces for the previous 15-year period increased to more than 10,000,000 ounces after the discovery of the *Cerro Rico* at Potosí in 1545.

Lazo provides no annual figures of silver coined for the years 1574–1599. Annual totals are provided for the period of 1600–1625, without specifics by denomination. He does, however, provide highly detailed data for 1626–1825, except for some half-dozen scattered years for which statistics were not found or provided. A quick tabulation of the 225 years, rounding to the nearest million, demonstrates that the Potosí mint struck about 596 million *pesos* (roughly dollars) worth of

10. Source. Dr. Adolph Soetbeer (1814–1892) was a well-known economist in the mid-nineteenth century and Secretary of the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce. A staunch promoter of monometalism, he was instrumental in Germany's adoption of the gold standard in the 1870's. The U.S. mint cited his metals production figures extensively until calculating their own in the 1880's and afterwards.

Table 1. Global gold and silver production by year-group (annual average) in fine ounces (rounded to the nearest thousands). From Stickney, Appendix C, as derived from The Annual Report of the Director of the Mint, 1924.

Years	Gold	Silver
1493–1520	186,000	1,511,000
1521–1544	230,000	2,900,000
1545–1560	274,000	10,018,000
1561–1580	220,000	9,629,000
1581–1600	237,000	13,468,000
1601–1620	274,000	13,596,000
1621–1640	267,000	12,694,000
1641–1660	282,000	11,777,000
1661–1680	298,000	10,835,000
1681–1700	346,000	10,992,000

coinage for the period, an average annual output of 2.64 million *pesos* for more than two centuries.

This is a little more than four times of all the silver coins struck by various U.S. mints from 1793–1873<sup>11</sup> when the national coinage act of 1873 ushered in a new, more productive era for minting operations.<sup>12</sup> Put another way, Potosí's coinage output slightly exceeded the 570 million U.S. silver dollars struck under the 1878 Bland-Allison and 1890 Sherman Silver Purchase Acts that mandated the procurement and coining of millions of ounces of silver for a number of years from 1878 to 1904.

This begs the question: what happened to all that silver? That is difficult to document. Theoretically, 20% “off the top” went to the Crown as the *quinta* tax on refined precious metals, some of which was used to pay the costs of colonial administration. But there were other taxes imposed, one of which was the *alcabala* (sales tax), generally varying from about 2–4% administered by the *audiencia*.

11. Cumulative silver coinage from 1793–1873 including all active mints and silver denominations amounted to \$147,489,898.

12. The Act of February 12, 1873 (an act revising and amending the laws relative to the Mint, assay offices, and coinage of the United States). Known primarily for replacing the standard silver dollar with the trade dollar and attendant weight adjustments to minor coins, the law contained other important and more lasting features. The 1873 law created the Bureau of the Mint under the Treasury Department with supervision of the several assay offices.

More important was the *almojarifazgo* or customs duty collected at ports running about 15% of value that was collected on both imports and exports. Thus, much of the silver, either in bullion or coinage, ended up in Europe in the form of public and/or private remittances. Much of this ultimately was re-coined over the years as currency for other countries. After all, that is one reason why colonial mints struck such a high volume of their coinage in the higher denominations, principally the eight-*real*. We must recall that this was the age of mercantilism with its many trade restrictions and biases to favor the home country in the colonial era. Many of the early Spanish conquistadors and settlers were second and third sons who had to borrow heavily to fund their New World ventures. If they survived and were successful, they had to pay off their debts. It is perhaps instructive referring again to the 1895 annual report of the U.S. mint table listing the stock of silver in countries and regions around the world. Spain had the world's third highest per capita stock of silver at \$9.49 while South American countries, listed collectively, were a meager \$0.83.

United States treasury officials and policy makers, few as there were at the earliest days of the U.S. mint, appear to have gotten it right by having the U.S. dollar emulate the Spanish milled dollar, at least in terms of physical dimensions. Spain's eight-*real* was the coin of the realm for its day, a characterization that eventually passed to the United States dollar. One might say that the nineteenth century evolved at the twilight of the Spanish milled dollar (eight-*real* or *peso*) and the dawn of the U.S. dollar. Several circumstances contributed to that phenomenon, not the least of which was the achievement of independence of Mexico, and Central and South American countries in 1821 and 1825. The mints in the region, including Potosí, began striking new series of coins, often with the same denominations and dimensions as their colonial predecessors, but with distinct national designs. Thus, there was a loss of visual uniformity. Within a few decades most of the mints gravitated to a decimal-based monetary regime, in part, to facilitate more broad-based trading networks, to include the United States. Potosí, for its part, remained active throughout the nineteenth century, often striking between one and two million dollars-worth of silver coin under multiple monetary regimes. By the twentieth century, fiat money and banking began to supplant dependence on bullion backed coin in circulation and the Potosí mint closed. Today it is a beautiful museum and archival repository of colonial records of all types.

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## A Biography of Thomas Sparrow (V)

JOE DARAGAN (ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA)

Silversmith, engraver, die-cutter, and patriot, Thomas Sparrow (V) had his moments. Unfortunately for a biographer, those moments were few. He came from a long line of Sparrows, yet was neither wealthy nor prominent. Only a few examples of his work in silver survive. Sparrow does deserve mention for his role in Colonial currency and coinage. He prepared woodcuts for Maryland currency, designing the 1775 Gunpowder Notes. In 1783, he prepared dies for John Chalmers' silver token coinage.

The first Thomas Sparrow migrated to Maryland from Virginia in 1650.<sup>1</sup> Sparrow was a Nonconformist, and left Virginia when its government imposed restrictions on settlers not of the Anglican faith. By 1710 Sparrow's descendants had acquired plantations totaling approximately 7,500 acres in Maryland, North Carolina, and the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

The Sparrows were Quakers. The first Thomas Sparrow was a Puritan, but he married a Quaker. Thomas Sparrow (II) "became such a wholehearted Friend that in 1661 he was fined five hundred pounds of tobacco for refusing to bear arms in the colonial militia." Thomas Sparrow (II) died in 1675.<sup>2</sup>

1. Margaret W. Sparrow, "The Sparrows of Sparrows Point," *Maryland Historical Magazine* Vol. 85, no. 4 (Winter 1990), pp. 395–404.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 399.

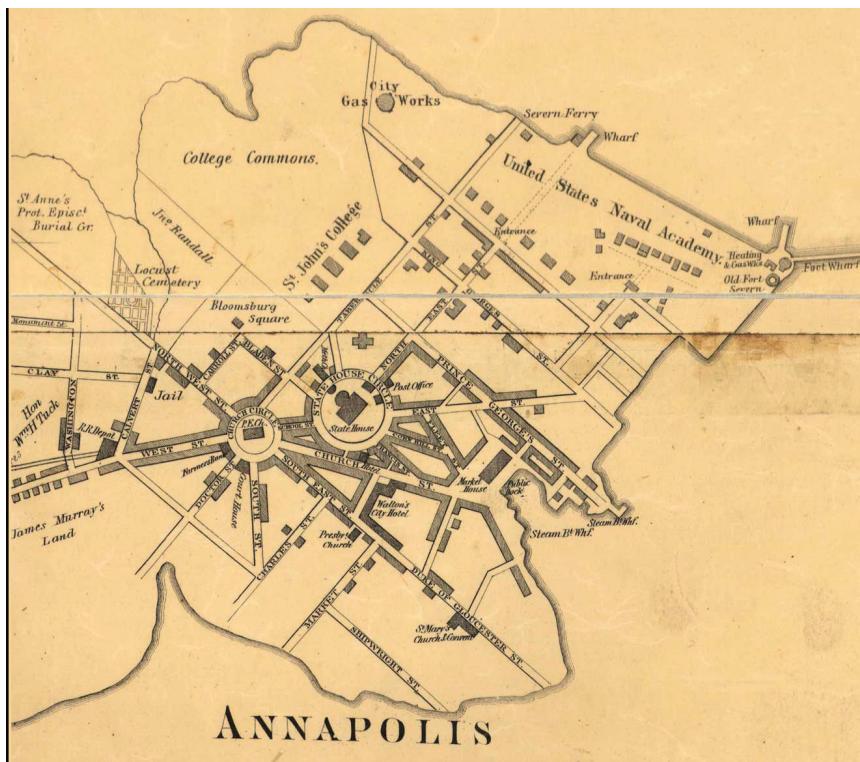


Figure 1. Lot 51, southeast corner, South East Street (now Duke of Gloucester Street) and Charles Street, Annapolis. Thomas Sparrow's home and shop was on South East Street. Detail of Annapolis from Simon J. Martenet, Map of Anne Arundel County, 1860, MSA SC 1213-1-117.

Thomas Sparrow (III) married three times, inheriting land from each wife. He was a devout Quaker, an Annapolis merchant, and a property owner in both Maryland and North Carolina. In Maryland, Sparrow had inherited a 300-acre plantation in Calvert County, and 200 acres on the Patapsco in Baltimore County. To these holdings, he added land inherited from each of his wives. He wrote wills in Maryland and North Carolina, leaving land to each of his eight children.<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Sparrow (IV) inherited as much as 1,200 acres from his father. Thomas Sparrow (IV) was not inclined to run plantations, perhaps by virtue of "a crippling disability."<sup>4</sup> Thomas Sparrow (IV) sold substantially all of his inher-

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 399–400.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 400.

ited land by 1747.<sup>5</sup> Around 1744 he acquired “Sparrow’s Request,” a 100-acre parcel in Frederick County.

Thomas Sparrow (IV) became Cryer of the Provincial and Anne Arundel County courts. In 1744, he was appointed Doorkeeper of the Lower House of the Maryland General Assembly, serving until his death in 1753. He invented a method for catching and curing fish, for which he was commended by the General Assembly in 1751. He was active in finance and real estate. Perhaps from experience as the cryer in the county court, he was plaintiff in some cases, and defendant in others, in legal actions that used straw parties and dummy defendants to protect sales of land from entails and other claims. He also served as surety on bonds covering sums owed to the Province. In 1748 he purchased part of Lot 51, his parcel bounded by South East and Charles Streets in Annapolis. Here the Doorkeeper and his children lived until his death in 1753 (Fig. 1).

Thomas Sparrow (V) was born on November 11, 1745. He was seven when his father died, leaving him the ward of Jonas Green, the printer for the Province and the publisher of the *Maryland Gazette*. Thomas Sparrow (IV)’s will named Jonas Green, and prominent Maryland landholders Walter Dulany and Daniel Dulany Jr., co-executors.<sup>6</sup> When the Dulanys declined to serve, Jonas Green became the sole executor and guardian of Thomas (V) and his two sisters.

His father’s estate included debts, sums due his father from the Province, and some real property. Jonas Green and Anne Catherine Green (who served as executor after Jonas Green died in 1767) deducted the expenses incurred in raising Thomas from the estate’s assets. The Greens recorded payments of £159 19 s for expenses, including treatment for smallpox,<sup>7</sup> at the rate of £26 per year until Thomas (V) moved to Philadelphia, and an additional £136 7 s for clothes, laundry and other expenses during his Philadelphia apprenticeship and for board when he returned to Annapolis.<sup>8</sup>

5. Stephanie Taleff Sperling, *Limited Phase III Investigations at 18AN339: the Java Plantation, and 18AN1285: Camp Letts, Rhode River Region, Anne Arundel County, Maryland*, (Draft Report) (Anne Arundel County’s Lost Towns Project, 2008), Vol. III, p. 12.

6. *Abstracts of Prerogative Court Wills* (Liber 28, 1751–1754) William Hand Browne, Edward C. Papenfuse, et. al. eds., *Archives of Maryland*, 215+ volumes, (Baltimore and Annapolis, Md., 1883–), 731: 435–36 (hereinafter cited as *Archives of Maryland*). This series is ongoing and available on line at <http://aomol.msa.maryland.gov/> where volumes, collectively or individually, can be searched electronically.

7. There was a smallpox outbreak in Annapolis in April 1757. Eugene F. Cordell, *The Medical Annals of Maryland 1799–1899...* (Baltimore 1903), p. 653.

8. Estate inventory prepared by Anne Catherine Green on October 1, 1767 (Manuscript in Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD, Accounts box 75 folder 20). Final accounting—PREROGATIVE COURT (Accounts) 1718–1777, Book 60, fol. 210, January 12, 1769, MSA S531, MSA\_TE\_1\_059\_0354-0356.



Figure 2. *Maryland Gazette*, March 21, 1765, p. 2, Thomas Sparrow's Advertisement.

It is unclear whether the Province ever paid Jonas Green any money owed Sparrow. In 1755, Green petitioned the Assembly for payment, but the petition was tabled, held over to the 1756 session, and apparently forgotten.<sup>9</sup> Young Thomas Sparrow (V) thus received an inheritance, although not a substantial inheritance. The final accounting for Thomas Sparrow (IV)'s estate reported £397 15 s in assets and £299 6 s in debts. The assets primarily were 41,930 pounds of tobacco in the custody of sheriffs in nine Maryland counties (valued at £262 at 12/6 a hundredweight). The estate also included a house and a tenement, the lot at South-East Street and Charles Street in Annapolis, and 100 acres in Frederick County. By the final accounting the house and tenement had been sold.

Sparrow probably worked in Jonas Green's print shop as a child, but he sought a career elsewhere. From August 1759 to September 1764 he was apprenticed to Philip Syng, Jr., a Philadelphia silversmith.<sup>10</sup> On his return to Annapolis in 1764 he lodged with the Greens, until he came of age in November 1766.

On March 21, 1765, an advertisement (Fig. 2) appeared in the *Maryland Gazette* informing Annapolitans that there was a new goldsmith in town. Thomas

9. *Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland February 1755–October 1756*, *Archives of Maryland* 52:33 (introduced in the Upper House), 52:83 (introduced in the Lower House); 52:85 (tabled).

10. Catherine B. Hollan, *Philadelphia silversmiths and related artisans to 1861* (Hollan Press, Walsworth Publishing Company, 2013), p. 191.

Sparrow, Goldsmith and Jeweler from Philadelphia, had opened his shop in South-East Street near Church Circle. Sparrow "Makes all sorts of GOLD and SILVER work," from teapots, tankards, and tureens to chains, thimbles, and rings. For trade with Indians he would make gorgets and all sorts of work. He offered sword hilts, "pierc'd, gadroon'd, and plain." He also would sell barometers, hydrometers, "all kinds of stones," and ivory work. In all, there were 37 lines of items Sparrow would make or sell. Buyers could have their purchases monogrammed or engraved with letters for a penny a letter. Sparrow advertised that he marked his silver with the word STERLING.

Opening a goldsmith shop in Annapolis was as audacious as it was ambitious. Silversmithing was capital intensive, requiring an "established place of business" and "at least a forge, molds, anvils, and other heavy equipment."<sup>11</sup> Competition was intense. Purchasers preferred to obtain gold and silverware from England or from Philadelphia. During Sparrow's career as an independent goldsmith, he had at least two other successful competitors, William Faris and James Chalmers (John Chalmers' father). Both Faris and the Chalmers supplemented their income from goldsmithing by operating taverns.

Sparrow associated his business with a watch and clockmaker in 1767, and was successful enough to advertise to hire two silversmiths in 1768.<sup>12</sup> However, he struggled to fund his shop's operations. In 1764 he placed a notice in the *Maryland Gazette* seeking a buyer for Sparrow's Request, a tenanted 100-acre parcel in Frederick County.<sup>13</sup> In 1766, he sold Sparrow's Request to Daniel Dulany, Jr. for £70 "current money."<sup>14</sup> Later that year, he mortgaged part or all of his inherited lot in Annapolis to William Wilkins for £24. Unable to repay the mortgage and besieged by other court judgments, he sold half of the mortgaged lot to Thomas Hodgkins in March 1768, for £175 Pennsylvania currency. This sum paid off the judgments and the mortgage, leaving him with an unspecified amount. In June 1768, Sparrow sold the remainder of his lot to Robert Johnson for £100 current money.<sup>15</sup>

11. Jennifer Faulds Goldsborough, *Silver in Maryland: Catalogue and Exhibition* (Museum and Library of Maryland History, Maryland Historical Society, 1983), p. 2.

12. *Maryland Gazette*, July 16, 1767; *Ibid.*, July 28, 1768.

13. *Maryland Gazette*, December 13, 1764.

14. *Provincial Court Land Records 1765-1770*, Sparrow to Dulany, June 2, 1766, *Archives of Maryland*, 725: 97-98.

15. *Archives of Maryland*, ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY DEEDS (a) Mortgage, Sparrow to Wilkins Liber BB3 fols. 653-54, December 1, 1766, MSA CM91 (MSA\_TE\_1\_160\_0235-0236). (b) Deed, Sparrow to Hodgkins Liber IB&JB no. 1, fols. 21-28, March 21, 1768, MSA CM91 (MSA\_TE\_1\_160\_0332-0336). (c) Deed, Sparrow to Johnson, Liber IB&JB no. 1, fols. 190-93, June 17, 1768, MSA CM91 (MSA\_TE\_1\_160\_417-418).



Figure 3. Maryland One Dollar, January 1, 1767. Image courtesy of Stack's-Bowers, Stack's January 15, 2008, Auction, Lot 4001.



Figure 4. Detail from Maryland One Dollar, showing Spanish Milled Dollar.

A cann (lidless tankard), a beaker, a cream pitcher, and three swords, along with some silver spoons, survive from Sparrow's shop. None of the items are marked "STERLING."

Along with engraving work at his shop, Thomas Sparrow provided engraving for the Green's printing business. In 1765, he engraved the Provincial coat of arms for Thomas Bacon's *Laws of Maryland at Large*.<sup>16</sup> He engraved the title page for Elie Vallette's *The Deputy Commissary's Guide within the Province of Maryland*.<sup>17</sup> In *A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland*, Lawrence C. Wroth calls Sparrow "the first Maryland engraver."<sup>18</sup>

16. Thomas Bacon, *Laws of Maryland at Large* (Annapolis: Jonas Green, 1765).

17. Elie Vallette, *The Deputy Commissary's Guide within the Province of Maryland* (Annapolis: Anne Catherine Green and son, 1774).

18. Lawrence C. Wroth, *A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland, 1686-1776* (Baltimore, Typothetae of Baltimore, 1922), p. 87. Wroth calls Sparrow's work artistically inferior and "generally crude" (p. 89).

In 1766, Sparrow's relationship with Jonas Green paid off when he was commissioned to engrave border cuts for a new issue of Maryland currency. The issue, dated January 1, 1767, replaced a previous issue that had been called for redemption. The bills were denominated in dollars, "the earliest governmental use of 'dollar' as an official unit of monetary value in the world."<sup>19</sup> Sparrow's elaborate border cuts incorporated his name (in full on some bills) and "JG" or "JG PRINTER" for Jonas Green. In addition to the border cuts, Sparrow may have engraved illustrations of Spanish milled dollars appearing on the Maryland dollar and two-dollar bills (Figs. 3 and 4).

Sparrow's work was reused for the 1770 and 1774 issues of Maryland currency. He likely would have strengthened border cuts or provided replacement cuts for these issues.

Sparrow's legal troubles did not end in 1768. John Shaw, an Annapolis furniture maker, accused Sparrow of assault in April 1770. The case appears to have been settled and the suit dismissed in July 1771, with Sparrow paying Shaw three shillings and the costs of the suit.<sup>20</sup> According to *Mysterious Life of John Shaw*,<sup>21</sup> Shaw and Sparrow later worked together. John Shaw commissioned Sparrow to engrave furniture labels for his business. These labels appear on furniture made by Shaw, including on a chair Shaw later made for the Maryland General Assembly.

On March 30, 1774, Parliament passed the Boston Port Bill. The Bill closed the port to commerce until Boston paid the East India Company for tea destroyed at the Boston Tea Party. In response, 80 Annapolis citizens convened on May 25 to pass a resolution to stop all imports from, and exports to, Great Britain. On May 30, 125 other citizens signed a protest partially opposing the non-importation agreement. They dissented from a provision barring Maryland attorneys from suing any Maryland citizen to collect a debt owed to any inhabitant of Great Britain. This provision unfairly targeted British merchants for retaliation and would destroy Maryland's credit standing. Thomas Sparrow was among the Annapolis merchants and artisans who signed the protest. When an-

19. Eric P. Newman, *The Early Paper Money of America* (5th ed., Krause Publications 2008), p. 171.

20. Maryland State Archives, MSA S551, *Provincial Court Judgment Record 1770*, vol. DD 17, fol. 75 and fol. 320; September term 1770 (capias), p. 75; April term 1771 ("rule plea" on July 20, 1771), p. 320. The court record is difficult to read, owing to clerical hand and to abbreviations. Apparently, the case was settled or dismissed. A possible interpretation: Sparrow charged with assault on Shaw (criminally or civilly); Sparrow ordered to appear in the September term. Shaw awarded 5 shillings less 2 shillings court costs. Leave to dismiss charges filed, and a plea entered on July 20.

21. [marylandstatehouse.blogspot.com](http://marylandstatehouse.blogspot.com), Jan 31, 2014.

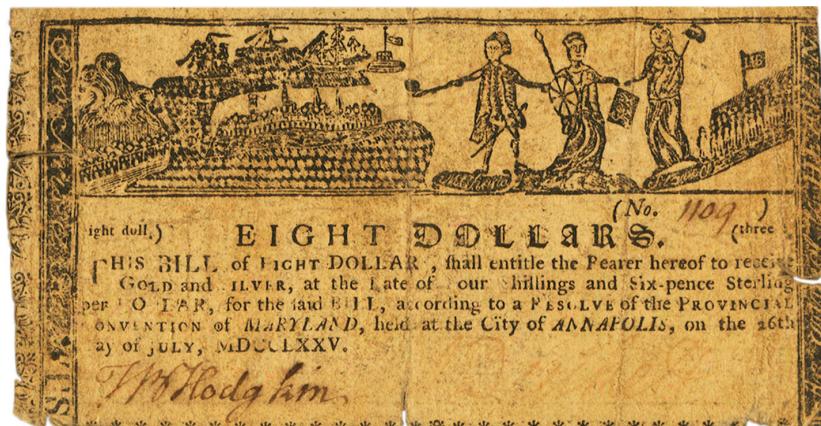


Figure 5. Maryland Eight Dollars ("Gunpowder Note"), front July 26, 1775. Image Courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com, November 1–2, 2017, Auction (Newman Part VIII), lot 28041.



Figure 6. Maryland Eight Dollars ("Gunpowder Note"), back July 26, 1775. Image Courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com, November 1–2, 2017, Auction (Newman Part VIII), lot 28041.

other non-importation resolution was passed in June 1774, the debt collection provision was not included.<sup>22</sup>

In August 1775 the Maryland Provincial Convention (in session beginning July 26, 1775) passed a resolution authorizing a new issue of bills, the proceeds to be used to promote the manufacture of gunpowder. Sparrow was selected to engrave these “Gunpowder Notes,” and devised woodcuts advocating the Patriot cause.

During the battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775, Admiral Sir Thomas Graves, supporting General Howe’s assault on Breed’s Hill, ordered his ships to fire hot shot into the village of Charlestown, setting it afire. He then ordered landing parties to torch the village in order to stop snipers firing on British troops. Sparrow’s woodcut on the face of the Gunpowder Notes depicts the burning of Charlestown. King George sets fire to the town while trampling on the Magna Carta. To the right, Britannia, with her back to the King, receives a petition from the Continental Congress. America, presenting the petition, tramples on “Slavery” as she stands in front of American troops (Fig. 5).

On the back of the note Sparrow depicts the reconciliation of Britannia and America, with the legend, “PAX TRIUMPHIS POTIOR,” or “Peace is preferable to victory” (Fig. 6).

As Maryland prepared to defend itself against any British invasion, Sparrow stepped forward to join the state’s defense. In November 1776 he offered to recruit militiamen from the Eastern Shore of Maryland. On November 15, 1776, he applied to James Murray, a member of the Council of Safety of Maryland, for money to pay recruits. Murray could not assist Sparrow due to prior commitments. He asked Major Thomas Muse of Cambridge, “a gentleman of fortune,” to deliver money to Sparrow (for recruiting) “agreeable to such Directions as your Council should send or give him.”<sup>23</sup> On November 21, the Council granted Sparrow a warrant to recruit “Matrosses” (artillerymen) for the state militia. The Council wrote to Major Muse, enclosing an order for £50, to be given Sparrow “in proportion to the number of men he may enlist.”<sup>24</sup> Sparrow set out from Annapolis, arriving in Cambridge by November 25. Major Muse had died before Sparrow’s arrival. During the following week, Sparrow wrote the Council requesting appointment of a replacement and cash for recruits. A Colonel Travers took the letter and promised to return with an answer.

22. Elihu S. Riley, “*The Ancient City*: A History of Annapolis, in Maryland, 1647–1887 (Annapolis, Record Print Office, 1887), pp. 165–69.

23. *Journal and Correspondence of the Council of Safety of Maryland (July 7–December 31, 1776)*, Archives of Maryland 12: 449.

24. *Ibid.*, 12: 465–66.

On December 3, the Council directed Joseph Daffin to deliver £100 currency to Sparrow, and to advance Sparrow 40 shillings. The rest was to be paid to Sparrow as recruits came in. Col. Travers returned to his house on Hooper's Island, but did not forward the Council's reply to Sparrow. After a six-day wait, Sparrow rode to Travers's house to get the letter. He then returned to Cambridge to begin his recruiting adventure.

In mid-December, Sparrow heard that the Dorchester County militia was meeting at the "Lightwood knot chapple" (now Laurel, Delaware). Peter Carvil, a local patriot, estimated that Sparrow could enlist 30 men at the meeting. Sparrow had not received any money from Daffin, but he and Carvil headed to Lightwood. They planned to pay recruitment bonuses from their own cash.

At the meeting, Sparrow read "the resolve of the Convention with respect to raising matrosses." This resolve provided for companies to be enlisted for state service, stationed at Baltimore and Annapolis, and serving only within Maryland. The crowd did not believe Sparrow. One man told him that the resolve was a trick to enlist men for the Continental army. A loyalist called the 40-shilling bounty worthless and offered 50 shillings in gold or silver to anyone to fight for the King. A young man in the crowd advised Sparrow to leave or he would be murdered. Sparrow rode off into the dark. Hearing horsemen in full pursuit, he took to the woods and made his escape.

Returning to Cambridge, Sparrow managed to enlist some recruits at his own expense. He sold his sword and watch to pay them. He then "beat up for men" in Cambridge. A hostile crowd assembled. Someone in the mob tried to seize a flag that Sparrow had made of two sheets of small bills. The crowd heckled Sparrow and urged men not to enlist. Fortunately for Sparrow, John Chalmers was in the crowd. He handed Sparrow a sword and they chased the mob away. Undeterred, Sparrow hoped to recruit matrosses at two days of horse races in New Market, fairly close to Cambridge, but his friends advised him that it was unsafe to recruit there, and he gave up the idea.

On January 5, 1777, he described his recruiting adventure in a memorial to the Council.<sup>25</sup> He defended his conduct and concluded, "I am determined to pursue in any station you may think proper to place me in, if it is only a private...." On January 21, the Council paid Sparrow 57 shillings to cover expenses incurred in his adventure.

On January 25, 1777, Sparrow ended his career as an independent silversmith. In return for a loan of £15, Sparrow mortgaged his furniture and silversmith tools to William Faris.<sup>26</sup> Sparrow joined the state militia as a sergeant

25. *Journal and Correspondence of the Council of Safety of Maryland (January 1, 1777–March 28, 1778)*, Archives of Maryland 16: 19–21.

26. "...six raising anvils, a square faced planishing seat, two lapidary mills, two frame

(John Chalmers served as a captain).<sup>27</sup> He continued to do business with the Council of Safety in 1777 and 1778, selling £69 of lead to the Council on June 2, 1777.

Sparrow's militia company patrolled the Eastern Shore to defend against British raids and local Tory insurrections between 1777 and 1779. One day in 1779, he spent 15 shillings for toddy at William Faris's tavern, when toddy cost a shilling a glass.<sup>28</sup> As a militia company sergeant in 1779, it is quite possible that he bought drinks for men in his company.

By 1783, Thomas Sparrow still lived in Annapolis. The 1783 assessment of Annapolis Hundred, Anne Arundel includes Sparrow, but indicates he owned no land.<sup>29</sup> He may have leased a workshop or worked in the premises of John Chalmers or Frederick Green, for he continued to work as an engraver. He created bookplates for a number of clients. John Shaw, the cabinet-maker, used a bookplate made by Sparrow as a furniture label. "Always using a border of floriated scrolls (Sparrow) never omitted an original contrivance which is the characteristic mark of his work—a group of thirteen stars surrounded often by a wreath. This is always found in a prominent place...."<sup>30</sup>

Sparrow engraved seals for the State of Maryland. In 1783 and 1784 he designed and engraved seals for the Western Shore Land Office, the Maryland General Court, and the Maryland Court of Appeals.<sup>31</sup> He did other work for the State, including preparation of a brand to mark State property ("sundries"), receiving £2 5 s in November 1784.

Numismatically, Sparrow is remembered for his work on the 1783 Chalmers token coinage. In 1783, John Chalmers struck three silver tokens—threepence, sixpence, and one shilling—to provide a convenient alternative to the cut pieces saws, forty weight of pewter, buttons & buckles and silver work, and a number of files, pliers, cutting and Daping punches" Maryland State Archives, MSA CM91, ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY DEEDS Chattel Mortgage, Sparrow to Faris vol. IB5 fols. 375–76, January 25, 1777, (MSA\_TE\_162\_0048-0049).

27. Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application File, Federal Pension Papers, Record Group 15A, S. 8199, National Archives, Deposition of James Chalmers ([www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com)).

28. J. Hall Pleasants and Howard Sill, *Maryland silversmiths, 1715–1830, with illustrations of their silver and their marks and with a facsimile of the design book of William Faris* (R. A. Green 1972), p. 71.

29. Maryland State Archives, MSA S1161-1-1 1/4/5/44, p. 5 (Frederick Green is listed owning 4 acres, 4 lots. John Chalmers is listed owning 1-1/4 acres, 2 lots).

30. Wroth, p. 89 (citing Charles Dexter Allen, *American Book-Plates*).

31. *Remarks of Dr. Edward C. Papenfuse State Archivist At the dedication of the portrait of Former Chief Judge Robert C. Murphy, October 9, 1997*, <http://msa.maryland.gov/.../s1259/121/7970/html/remarks.html> (Thomas Sparrow designed and engraved the seal of the Court of Appeals).



Figure 7. Impressions of seals engraved by Thomas Sparrow for the Maryland Court of Appeals (l.) and Maryland General Court (r.).



Figure 8. Chalmers "Rings" Shilling, obverse (l.) and reverse (r.). Image Courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com., January 8, 2015, Auction lot 5659.

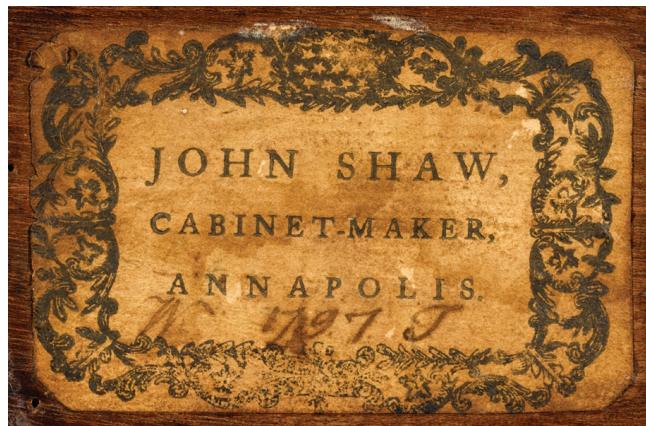


Figure 9. Bookplate engraved by Thomas Sparrow, used by John Shaw as a label on furniture made for the Maryland State House. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections MSA SC 1556-154/157. Furniture label from the shop of John Shaw.

of Spanish silver coin circulating in Annapolis. Chalmers employed his friend Thomas Sparrow to engrave the dies. Sparrow placed his initials on the reverse of the sixpence, which depicted clasped hands in the center of a cross.

John Kleeberg persuasively argued that the obverse of the Chalmers shilling depicted two billing doves, rather than two birds struggling over a worm. The doves and serpent imagery thus referred to Matthew 10:16, urging Marylanders to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.<sup>32</sup> The reverse iconography of clasped hands is seen as Christian by Kleeberg and by Henry Schab.<sup>33</sup> Schab associated the reverse design with the Quakers; Kleeberg argued that the design could be a Methodist symbol. As Kleeberg also noted, the “clasped hands” image is found in many cultural traditions.<sup>34</sup>

All three denominations of Chalmers tokens include an image of clasped hands on one side of the token. All seals Sparrow engraved in 1783 for the Maryland General Court, the Maryland Court of Appeals, and the Western Shore Land Office incorporate clasped hands and a star as part of the design (Fig. 7).<sup>35</sup>

#### THOMAS SPARROW AND THE CHALMERS TOKENS

##### Chalmers Shillings

The Rings Shilling is the first design for the Chalmers shilling (Fig. 8).

The five known specimens “all range from weak to indistinct at the centers.”<sup>36</sup> The obverse features clasped hands below an engraved legend “EQUAL TO ONE SHI.” The illustrated token, one of the finest known, illustrates why the design failed. No one could read the token’s denomination.

The reverse depicts a liberty cap, the All-Seeing Eye, and 13 stars. Eleven stars are placed in the rings; two flank the Liberty Pole. The star to the left of the cap and stars in the right rings are distorted, like the stars in Sparrow’s furniture label made for John Shaw (Fig. 9).

32. John Kleeberg, “Wise as Serpents, Harmless as Doves: The Iconography of the Chalmers Coinage,” *The Colonial Newsletter* no. 161 (American Numismatic Society 2016), pp. 4426–27.

33. Henry W. Schab, “The Life and Coins of John Chalmers,” *Numismatist* 97, no. 11 (November 1984), p. 2303.

34. In this respect, it may be noted that the image of clasped hands appeared in the Colonial-era seal of the Corporation (City) of Philadelphia. The image is also a Masonic emblem or symbol. Thomas Sparrow was an apprentice silversmith in Philadelphia for five years; was of Quaker ancestry; and was raised by Jonas Green, a Freemason (see Appendix). Any of these circumstances could explain his selection of clasped hands as a design type.

35. Maryland State Archives, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS (seals) MSA SC 1456, MDHR G1603.

36. Q. David Bowers, *Whitman Encyclopedia of Colonial and Early American Coins* (Whitman Publishing 2009), p. 72.

The clasped hands motif and the inexpertly engraved stars support the conclusion that Sparrow executed, and probably designed, both sides of the rings shilling.

The “worm” shilling (short worm or long worm) cured the defect of the rings shilling. The denomination was moved to the periphery of the token, where it was clearly visible (Fig.10).

As John Kleeberg has suggested, John Chalmers likely designed the reverse with the billing doves motif.<sup>37</sup> The obverse features Sparrow’s Clasped hands, set prominently in the center. It would be possible, though not convenient, for Chalmers to engrave the reverse and Sparrow the obverse. It is more likely that Sparrow engraved dies for both sides.

### *Sixpence*

The sixpence (Fig. 11) displays a star in the center of a wreath on the obverse. The reverse has clasped hands in the center of a cross; T and S appear at either end of the cross in crescents (Fig. 12). This design clearly incorporates Sparrow’s star and hands motif, seen on the General Court and Court of Appeals seals, and is signed by Sparrow.

### *Chalmers Threepence*

The obverse design of this token (Fig. 13) is clasped hands. The reverse is a branch in a wreath. Other than the use of a wreath, there is little distinctive about the reverse design. Either Chalmers or Sparrow could have selected the reverse design. Since Sparrow designed the obverse, it is more likely than not that he designed the reverse.

Sparrow was a Quaker, practicing or by ancestry. Jonas Green, his guardian, was a Freemason. He may have drawn on Quaker or Masonic imagery when engraving the seals and the Chalmers tokens. We may only speculate on Sparrow’s reasons. The common motif of clasped hands demonstrates that Sparrow engraved the Chalmers tokens and selected most of the types.

## THE LAST OF THOMAS SPARROW

In 1785, Sparrow was a witness in a case concerning an assault on one Anne Richardson.<sup>38</sup> Thomas Sparrow then fades from view.

37. Kleeberg, op. cit. p. 4427.

38. Maryland State Archives, MSA M44-8 Annapolis Mayor’s Court (Minutes, 1783-1785) MdHR 5102-1, pp. 29, 35.



Figure 10. Shilling, Long Worm, obverse (l.) and reverse (r.). Courtesy of the American Numismatic Society. ANS 1941.149.8.



Figure 11. Chalmers Sixpence, obverse (l.) and reverse (r.). Images courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com, August 12–16, 2015, Auction lot 3911.



Figure 12. Detail from Fig. 11 showing Thomas Sparrow's initials "T S" on reverse of Chalmers sixpence.



Figure 13. Chalmers threepence, obverse (l.) and reverse (r.). Courtesy of the American Numismatic Society. ANS 1950.50.1.

When he died is not known. A post on genealogy.com states that Sparrow died before March 6, 1786, but no supporting evidence appeared in the post. Margaret Sparrow writes that he moved to Georgetown, Maryland (DC) and to Virginia,<sup>39</sup> but no Thomas Sparrow appears in the 1790 or 1800 census for those areas. A Thomas Sparrow is living in Montgomery County, Maryland according to the 1790 census, but this is not our Thomas Sparrow. No other Thomas Spar-

39. Sparrow, p. 401.

row is listed in the 1790 census. This, and his settled residence in Annapolis, suggests he died before 1790. Also suggestive is his non-appearance on pension applications for Revolutionary veterans.

### CONCLUSION

As a silversmith and engraver, Sparrow is obscure in comparison to Paul Revere. Unlike his fellow silversmith William Faris, he did not keep a diary, and his account books do not survive. He was not prominent, either as a landowner, a businessman, or a Patriot. He disappears from history after 1785. Yet he memorably crafted Maryland currency, silver tokens for John Chalmers, and seals for the State of Maryland, earning the title of “Maryland’s first engraver.”

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### APPENDIX: THOMAS SPARROW AND FREEMASONRY

In 1948, the Annapolis Lodge No. 89 A. F. & A. M. 13 celebrated its 100th anniversary. In a program to commemorate the occasion, J. Willis Smith wrote:

In the issue of March 21, 1765, and continuing through a number of subsequent issues, Thomas Sparrow, a silversmith in Annapolis, advertised his wares. Among the articles he manufactured he named “Masons Medals and Implements.” His sign, included in his advertisements, consisted of a pair of Compasses extended across an arc and enclosing the scales of Justice and a Candlestick. On the arc was ... engraved “T. Sparrow.” The compasses were surmounted by a coffee urn.

This would seem to indicate that Masonic Lodges, including the Lodge in Annapolis, were in active operation in the Province in 1765, else why would he advertise in the Gazette the manufacture and sale of Masonic material? *It would also indicate that he was a Mason, perhaps a Past Master, else how would he know how to make Masons’ medals and implements and why would he incorporate the Past Master’s emblem in his sign?*<sup>40</sup>

40. J. Willis Smith, *Early Masonry in Maryland*, Annapolis Lodge No. 89 Anniversary Program. 1848–1948 (Annapolis, MD 1948), p. 12.



Figure 14. 1775 Past Master's Jewel (Courtesy of The Phoenixmasonry Masonic Museum). [www.phoenixmasonry.org/masonicmuseum/past\\_masters\\_jewel\\_dtd\\_1775.htm](http://www.phoenixmasonry.org/masonicmuseum/past_masters_jewel_dtd_1775.htm).

In examining this issue, there are two questions:

1. Was Thomas Sparrow a Freemason?
2. Did Freemasonry influence his work?

Smith argues that Sparrow was a Mason, “perhaps a Past Master,” because he made Masonic medals and instruments, and because he incorporated the Past Master’s emblem: a pair of compasses extended across an arc (Fig. 14) in his advertisement.

No documentary evidence exists that Sparrow was a Mason, because no records of the Lodge survive. Sparrow’s ancestors were Quakers. Quaker opposition to taking oaths and to secret societies would deter Sparrow from becoming a Mason, if Sparrow practiced his ancestral faith. On the other hand, Jonas Green, Sparrow’s guardian from 1753 to 1767, was a Freemason. So, Sparrow was familiar to some extent with Freemasonry, its emblems, symbols and rituals. He expected to supply Masonic medals and instruments to Freemasons in the community.

Sparrow’s advertisement does feature a pair of compasses. There is no “arc” in the ad. Rather, there is a scroll with Sparrow’s name beneath the compasses (see Fig. 15 for a similar scroll). The compasses in the ad may be a Masonic emblem, but not the emblem of a Past Master.

Smith identified two more items in the ad as Masonic emblems: a candlestick and a set of scales. Sets of three candlesticks with burning candles appear as Masonic emblems. A candelabrum with three candles appears on a North



Figure 15. Title page, *Bacon's Laws* (1765). Thomas Bacon, *Laws of Maryland at Large* (Jonas Green 1765).

Carolina 1775 three-dollar note as part of a vignette of Masonic symbols and emblems. Two Masonic medals made around the latter half of the eighteenth century depict three candlesticks, as did a medal found in a grave containing soldiers who died in General Braddock's defeat in 1756.<sup>41</sup>

Masonic emblems on eighteenth-century currency and medals that the author has examined do not include depictions of Scales of Justice. *The True Masonic Chart, or Hieroglyphic Monitor*, a guide to Masonic beliefs, ceremonies, and symbols published in 1826, depicts Justice holding scales.<sup>42</sup> The Annapolis Lodge considered scales to be a Masonic emblem in 1948. This evidence does not establish that a "set of scales" was a Masonic emblem in 1765.

That one element of Sparrow's advertisement (the compasses) probably is a Masonic emblem does not demonstrate that other elements of the ad also are Masonic emblems. As a jeweler, he included jeweler's pans in his ad. As a silversmith, Sparrow offered silver candlesticks to buyers. Would a single candlestick call to mind an emblem of three burning candles? If Sparrow intended to depict that emblem, wouldn't a three-branched candelabrum be more appropriate?

We can't conclude that Sparrow was a Mason. Jonas Green was a Freemason. This shows that Sparrow knew about Freemasonry, but not that Green initiated Sparrow into the Annapolis Lodge. The only other evidence is Sparrow's ad in the *Maryland Gazette*. This ad merely shows that Sparrow could sell and make objects for local Masons.

Whether or not Sparrow himself was a Mason does not settle whether he used Masonic images in his work. Exposure to the rituals, emblems, and symbols of Freemasonry may have influenced his choice of types, including motifs of the Chalmers coinage. Of the numerous symbols or emblems used by Masons in the

41. William T. R. Marvin, *Materials for a Catalogue of Masonic Medals*, (Boston: privately printed 1877), pp. 20–21. See also: *American Journal of Numismatics*, Vol. XI, No. 1, July 1876, pp. 1–2, "Masonic Medals."

42. Jeremy L. Cross. *The True Masonic Chart, or Hieroglyphic Monitor*, Published and sold by the Author (New Haven 1826), p. 10 (<https://books.google.com/books?id=fYCqwgEACAAJ>, p. 29 of digitized edition).



Figure 16. Acacia sprig on Masonic medal ca. 1730–1800 (detail). Courtesy of The Phoenixmasonry Masonic Museum.



Figure 17. Acacia sprigs on border of North Carolina three-dollar note, August 21, 1775, (detail). Detail from image courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com September 5, 2018, Auction lot 20177.



Figure 18. Acacia in left border, face of Maryland eight-dollar note, Jan 1, 1767 (detail). Private collection.

eighteenth century, three should be considered; the sprig (or branch) of acacia, the All-Seeing Eye (the Eye of Providence), and the clasped hands.

The acacia is a symbol of immortality, of innocence, and of initiation. Acacia wood was used to construct the Ark of the Covenant, which was placed in the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple. The sprig of acacia appears on Masonic medals (Fig. 16),<sup>43</sup> and as a border on the three-dollar North Carolina note dated August 21, 1775 (Fig. 17).

The left border of many denominations of the 1767 Maryland bills of credit incorporates sprigs of acacia, as evident in the border of the eight-dollar bill (Fig. 18).

43. Marvin, op. cit., p. 20; [www.phoenixmasonry.org/masonicmuseum/old\\_masonic\\_jewel.htm](http://www.phoenixmasonry.org/masonicmuseum/old_masonic_jewel.htm).

The All-Seeing Eye was in wide use as a Masonic symbol in the eighteenth century. It appears on the three- and four-dollar North Carolina notes issued in 1775. It appears on all five Masonic medals that the author has seen in photographs or in descriptions. Thomas Smith Webb mentioned the All-Seeing Eye in *The Freemason's Monitor, or Illustrations of Masonry*, originally published in 1797.<sup>44</sup> The All-Seeing Eye appears on the reverse of the Chalmers Rings shilling.

None of the examined eighteenth-century objects depict clasped hands, although they do depict a hand extended in greeting. Clasped hands as a Masonic symbol of brotherly love appear in *The True Masonic Chart, or Hieroglyphic Monitor*.<sup>45</sup> According to Tim Bryce, "Those who learn (the Masonic handshake) are taught to subscribe to the three basic tenets of Freemasonry, which are friendship, morality, and brotherly love."<sup>46</sup> In engraving the court seals and the Chalmers coinage, Sparrow may have incorporated the three ideals expressed by the Masonic handshake into his designs.

The evidence is inconclusive to establish whether Sparrow ever was initiated as a Mason. However, it is possible that Sparrow drew on Masonic symbols and ritual for some decorative elements used in his work.

44. Thomas Smith Webb, *The Freemason's Monitor, or Illustrations of Masonry*, (Salem, Cushing, and Appleton 1818), p. 80.

45. Jeremy L. Cross, op. cit., Entered Apprentice Degree (p. 33 of Google Books digitized edition).

46. [www.freemasoninformation.com/2017/03/the-secret-of-masonic-handshakes](http://www.freemasoninformation.com/2017/03/the-secret-of-masonic-handshakes).